PIRANESI

ARTHUR SAMUEL

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PIRANESI

PORTRAIT OF GIOVANNI BATTISTA PIRANESI.

PIRANESI

ARTHUR SAMUEL

2nd Edition

LONDON
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PHŒBE

TO THE READER

For some years past I have admired and collected the etchings of Piranesi, and feeling a desire to know more about this wonderful man and his son Francesco, I have gathered together such facts as are available. The result is this monograph which deals not only with the etchings which are, for the most part, of views of Rome and its ancient remains, but also with the influence the etchings have had upon the architecture and decorative schemes associated with the names of the brothers Adam, and upon the furniture designs of Chippendale, Sheraton, and their successors.

The monograph must, however, be read

only on the distinct understanding that the composition of its pages contains nothing original so far as I am concerned. If the result of the perusal be satisfactory to the reader the credit will not be mine ; if, on the other hand, it be unsatisfactory I shall be ready to accept responsibility. I have levied toll upon every available work of authority, standard or otherwise, in English, French and Italian, and whatever I have found I have taken, lock, stock and barrel, and with such catholicity that, for fear of placing too exhausting a strain upon my printer's supply of subsidiary types, I have not given references, and I have not used as many inverted commas as I ought otherwise to have done.

A few reproductions are included in this volume for the purpose of conveying an idea of the general character of Piranesi's etchings. It should be borne in mind

that the original etchings suffer in being reduced from their very large size to the small proportions of the present reproductions. In most cases the original etchings measure not less than 25 inches by 15 inches, some indeed are much larger.

I have to thank my publisher, Mr. Herbert Batsford, for many valuable suggestions and for the pains he has taken in the production of the book; he has gone to considerable trouble to collate the etchings, the list of which I give, every effort has been made to render it perfect; I hope the student will find it of service.

ARTHUR SAMUEL.

48 Montagu Square, W.
October 1910.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The call for a second edition of this book has enabled me to include additional information and to make a few corrections.

I wish to tender humble thanks to the Press and the Critics for the kindness shown to the first edition. I also desire to reply to a criticism.

Several reviewers have suggested that the book would have been a better one had it been divided into chapters. They are probably correct in their view.

But I could not originally have written the book in chapters, and, even now, I cannot persuade myself to make any such alteration.

I wrote as I felt, letting my mind play freely round the subject, as a musician trying to express what is moving him lets his fingers wander over his instrument. My aspirations do not go beyond the *lanx satura* : the book is but a medley, a plate heaped with the first-fruits of literary effort : an offering, not to the gods, but to mortals.

That is the excuse for its form.

A. S.

July 1912.

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THE Reproductions in this volume are given for the purpose of conveying a rough idea of the character of Piranesi's Etchings. The originals from which they have been taken are very large, in many cases they measure 25 × 15 inches. The reduction in size, resulting from the process of reproduction, has decreased the particular effects which distinguish the originals.

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Iscrizione Lapidaria che si legge nel piedestallo della suddetta Statua la di cui altezza è di palmi Romani
D M
CINERIBVS ET MEMORIAE
IOAN · BAPTISTAE · PIRANESI
DOMO · VENETIIS
SCALPTORIS · LINEARIS · AERE · CAELANDO
PLASTAE · SIGILLARI · ARCHITECTI
QVEM
CLEMENS · XIII · PONT · MAX ·
OB · INGENI · LAVDEM · ET · OPERVM · EXCELLENTIAM
EQVESTRI · DIGNITATE · EXORNAVIT
PIVS · VIXIT · ANNOS · LVIII ·
DECESSIT · V · ID · NOVEMB ·
ANNO · M · DCC · LXXVIII ·
ET · SCRIPTIS · ET · INVENTIS · ET · AVSIS
CLARVS · APVD · AEQVALES
VTILIS · POSTERITATI
ANGELICA · VXOR
VIRO · CARISSIMO
FRANCISCVS · ANGELVS · PETRVS
FILII · QVI · ET · HEREDES
PARENTI · OPTIMO · MERITO
FAC · CVR ·
LOCO · DATO
AB · IOAN · BAPT · REZZONICO
CARD · MAC · PRIOR · VRBIS
ORD · HIEROSOL ·
PATRONO
INDVLGENTISS ·

STATUE OF PIRANESI IN THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA IN AVENTINO.

PIRANESI

"My two friends came as expected, also Missie, and staid till half-past two. Promised Sharpe the set of Piranesi's views in the dining parlour. They belonged to my Uncle, so I do not like to sell them."—Sir Walter Scott's Diary, Feb. 14, 1826 (Lockhart's *Life*).

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, the etcher of the views which hung in Sir Walter Scott's dining parlour, was born at Venice on October 4, 1720,[1] not 1707 as stated by Michaud, and he died at Rome or at Tivoli, on November 9, 1778, of a trifling illness rendered fatal by neglect. Angelo Piranese, his father, was a man in humble circumstances, a mason, familiarly known by the nickname "l'orbo celega"—"the foolish blind man," "the one-eyed sparrow,"

[1] The inscription on the portrait engraved by his son, "Vix. ann. 58, ob. . . . 1778," fixes the date at 1720. (See Plate I.)

for he was blind of one eye. Temanza, a fellow-pupil with Giovanni under their master, Scalfarotto, describes the father as a shoemaker, but that description is unconfirmed and should be disregarded. Giovanni's mother was Laura, sister of the engineer and architect Lucchesi who had constructed waterworks and had built the Church of San Giovanni Novo at Venice; it was from his uncle Lucchesi that Piranesi received his first lessons in Art, but, says Temanza, as uncle and nephew were of a "stravagante" nature, they soon quarrelled and parted.

From earliest childhood he had been famed for uncommon beauty of countenance and for extraordinary precocious powers. At the age of eight he was able to draw the architectural beauties of Venice. At ten he could construct from his own imagination designs for buildings, and it is said that Venetian masons even then took ideas from his drawings. At fifteen his name was

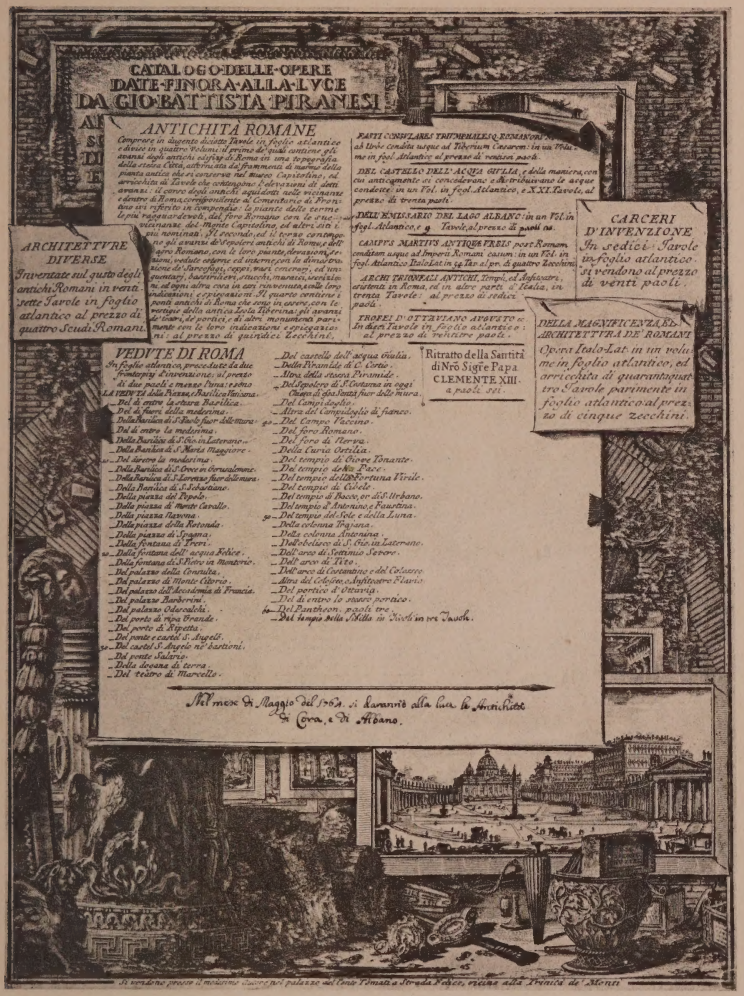
known on the Rialto, and his father was confident he would make his way successfully in the trade which he himself followed.

Towards the end of 1737 Piranesi, who had been taking instruction from Onofrio Mascati, began to dream of Rome. Francesca Corraghi, the young girl to whom he was attached, had on the death of her parents come from Rome to live with friends at Venice. She had fired his ambition ; she spoke to him of Rome, of Rome with its infinite Art treasures, and persuaded him to go thither and try his fortune. Notwithstanding his parents' opposition, he persisted in his determination to obtain their consent to follow the career marked out for him by Francesca and to leave Venice. By the time he had reached his eighteenth year Giovanni had given such ample proof of ability and aptitude that his father was finally induced to send him to Rome to study architecture and engraving, and he obtained for him the position of

draughtsman on the staff of the Venetian Ambassador to the Pope. But although Francesca Corraghi had inspired him to go forward and strike out for himself, while he was at Rome at work on the Campo Vaccino she threw him over to marry the Conte d'Amalfi. Furnished with an allowance from his father of six Spanish piastres a month—about five shillings in English money—Giovanni reached Rome in 1738, and began his studies under Valeriani, Vasi, Scalfarotto, and other masters.

Through Ricci of Belluno (born 1680) and Pannini (born 1691) was transmitted to Piranesi that taste for imaginative landscape painting cultivated by Gellée[1] (born 1600, and better known as Claude de Lorrain). Gellée's work had stimulated Ricci and Pannini to devote their talents to

[1] Some of Turner's compositions bring Piranesi's etchings to mind. Gellée (Claude) is the link. Turner set himself to study, rival and surpass Gellée, and the influence of the latter is woven into Turner's art.


CATALOGO DELLE OPERE
DATE FINORA ALLA LVCE
DA GIO BATTISTA PIRANESI
ANTICHITÀ ROMANE
Comprese in diecinte diciotto Tavole in foglio atlantico e divise in quattro Volumi, il primo de' quali contiene gli avanzi degli antichi edifizj di Roma in una topografia della stessa Città, altrimenti da frammenta di marmo della pianta antica che si conserva nel Museo Capitolino, ed arricchita di Tavole che ottengono i elevazioni di detti avanzi. Il corso degli antichi acquidotti nelle vicinanze, e dentro di Roma, corrispondente di Comentario di Frontino ivi riferito in compendio: la pianta delle terme le più ragguardevoli, dal Foro Romano sino le ville vicinanze del Monte Capitolino, ed altre cose ivi notissime. Il secondo, ed il terzo contengono gli avanzi de' teatri antichi di Roma, dell' Agro Romano, con le loro piante, elevazioni, profili, misure, ornati esattamente rilevati, e diligentemente incisi. Il quarto contiene gli avanzi de' sepolcri, ossia mausolei, colombarj, ed urne cinerarie, basirilievi, cippi, vasi, cornicioni, ed ogni altra cosa in essi ritrovata, colle loro iscrizioni, e spiegazioni. Il quarto contiene i ponti antichi di Roma che sono in piedi, con le vestigie dello antico Isola Tiberina: gli avanzi de' bagni, de' portici, e altri monumenti pariamente con le loro iscrizioni e spiegazioni: al prezzo di quindici Zecchini.
FASTI CONSULARES TRIUMPHALESQ. ROMANORUM ab Urbe condita usque ad Tiberium Cæsarem: in un Volume in fogl. Atlantico al prezzo di venticinque paoli.
DEL CASTELLO DELL'ACQUA GIULIA, e della maniera con cui anticamente si conducevano, e distribuivano le acque condotte in un Vol. in fogl. Atlantico, e XXI. Tavole al prezzo di trenta paoli.
DELL'EMISSARIO DEL LAGO ALBANO in un Vol. in fogl. Atlantico e 9 Tavole, al prezzo di paoli 10.
CAMPVS MARTIVS ANTIQVÆ VRBIS post Romanorum ædificia usque ad Imperij Romani exitum: in un Vol. in fogl. Atlantico Italo Lat. in 14 Tav. al pr. di quattro Zecchini.
ARCHI TRIONFALI ANTICHI, Templi, ed Altri edifizi, esistenti in Roma, ed in altre parti d'Italia, in trenta Tavole: al prezzo di sedici paoli.
TROPEI D'OTTAVIANO AVGVSTO e in dieci Tavole in foglio atlantico: al prezzo di quindici paoli.
CARCERI D'INVENZIONE
In sedici Tavole in foglio atlantico: si vendono al prezzo di venti paoli.
ARCHITETTVRE DIVERSE
Inventate sul gusto degli antichi Romani in venti sette Tavole in foglio atlantico al prezzo di quattro Scudi Romani.
DELLA MAGNIFICENZA ED ARCHITETTVRA DE' ROMANI
Opera Italo Lat. in un volume in foglio atlantico, ed arricchita di quarantaquattro Tavole parimente in foglio atlantico al prezzo di cinque Zecchini.
VEDVTE DI ROMA
In foglio atlantico, prese tutte da due Prospetive d'invenzione: si vendono di due paoli e mezzo l'una: e sono
LA VEDVTA della Piazza, e Basilica Vaticana.
Del di fuori della medesima.
Della Basilica di S. Paolo fuor delle mura.
Del di dentro la medesima.
Della Basilica di S. Gio in Laterano.
Della Basilica di S. Maria Maggiore.
Del di dentro la medesima.
Della Basilica di S. Pietro in Vincula.
Della Basilica di S. Lorenzo fuor delle mura.
Della Basilica di S. Sebastiano.
Della piazza del Popolo.
Della piazza di Monte Cavallo.
Della piazza Navona.
Della piazza della Rotonda.
Della piazza di Spagna.
Della fontana di Trevi.
Della fontana dell'acqua Felice.
Della fontana di S. Pietro in Montorio.
Del palazzo della Cancelleria.
Del palazzo di Monte Citorio.
Del palazzo dell'Accademia di Francia.
Del palazzo Barberini.
Del palazzo Odescalchi.
Del porto di ripa Grande.
Del porto di Ripetta.
Del ponte e castel d'Angeli.
Del castel S. Angelo ne' bastioni.
Del ponte Salario.
Della dogana di terra.
Del teatro di Marcello.
Del castello dell'acqua Giulia.
Delle Piramidi di C. Cestio.
Altra della stessa Piramide.
Del Sepolcro di S. Costanza in oggi Chiesa di Sta Inesse fuor delle mura.
Del Campo Scelerato.
Altra del Campidoglio di fianco.
Del Campo Vaccino.
Del Foro Romano.
Del Foro di Nerva.
Della Curia Ostilia.
Del tempio di Giove Tonante.
Del tempio della Pace.
Del tempio della Fortuna Virile.
Del tempio di Cibele.
Del tempio di Bacco, or di S. Urbano.
Del tempio di Antonino e Faustina.
Del tempio del Sole e della Luna.
Della colonna Traiana.
Della colonna Antonina.
Dell'obelisco di S. Gio in Laterano.
Dell'arco di Settimio Severo.
Dell'arco di Tito.
Dell'arco di Costantino e del Coliseo.
Altra del Coliseo, e Anfiteatro Flavio.
Del portico d'Ottavia.
Del di entro lo stesso portico.
Del Panthéon, parte tre.
Del tempio della Sibilla in Tivoli in tre Tavole.
Ritratto della Santità di Nrō Sig.re Papa CLEMENTE XIII. a paoli 50.
Nel mese di Maggio del 1763. si daranno alla luce le Antichità di Cora, e di Albano.
Si vendono presso il medesimo Autore nel palazzo del fonte Pimalta a Strada Felice, vicino alla Trinità de' Monti

ENGRAVED CATALOGUE ISSUED BY PIRANESI IN 1764.

imaginative compositions, using as materials the moss-clad ruins with which Rome was covered, and which served, in Rome as well as in the Campagna, as habitations for a picturesque population of ragged beggars, robbers, and outlaws. Even the stairs of the Colosseum itself had long been hidden under a thick growth of clematis, and the forest of ilex and myrtle in the Baths of Caracalla was still existing in 1818, some years after Piranesi's death, when Shelley, then on his way to the villa at Este, near Mantua, lent him by Byron, composed his *Prometheus Unbound* beneath its shadow.

Ricci had been Valeriani's master, and from Valeriani Piranesi absorbed the style of Ricci, and, no doubt, some of his taste for romantic subjects, as witness such of Piranesi's plates as are creations of fancy. But the work he turned out with the assistance of his own force of imagination and his mastery of the etching tools was superior to that of Ricci or of Pannini. Valeriani was a great master

of perspective, and Piranesi owes much to him, as does he also to Vasi, the Sicilian, who gave him a thorough knowledge of the art of etching ; but Vasi's engravings, although full of careful execution and quality, look insipid when compared with the bold work in Piranesi's plates. It was Vasi who first filled the young Goethe with a desire to visit Italy, and the very engravings of Vasi which thus inspired Goethe now hang in the Goethe-Haus at Frankfort.

When little more than twenty years of age, Piranesi, fancying that his instructor Vasi was hiding from him the true secret of the uses of aqua fortis, actually attempted to murder him. According to Biagi, Piranesi's suspicions were not entirely baseless, as Vasi had become jealous of his pupil. Vasi appears to have treated the matter lightly, for it ended in his simply turning Piranesi out of his studio.

Tall in person, of dark complexion, with

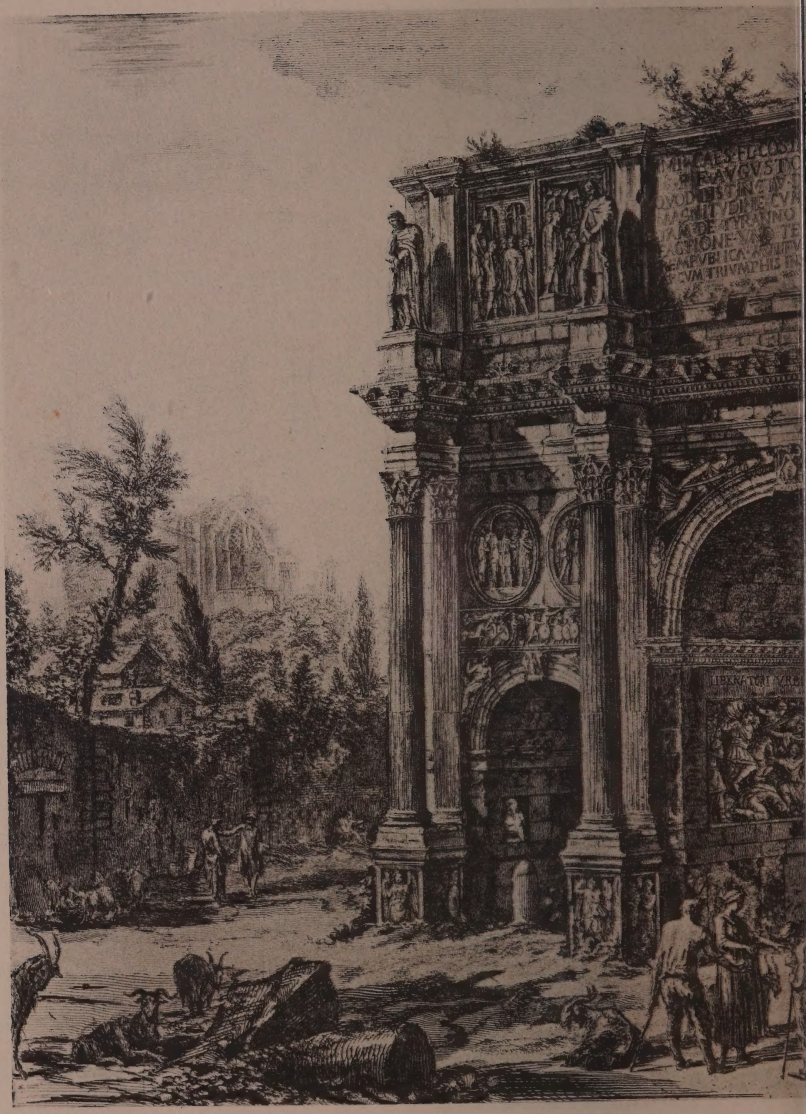
restless bright eyes, despondent and exultant by rapid changes, imaginative, jealous, perhaps vain to a high degree, always eager to annoy his neighbour, the young Piranesi vividly recalls Benvenuto Cellini in temperament and character. It is not indeed to be wondered at that a man so generously endowed by nature with an intensely vivid imagination, should have been highly sensitive and irritable. Nor must it be forgotten that men possessed of real force of character are never altogether pleasant in disposition. Strongly conscious of his own power, he thought himself capable of great things, valued himself highly, and brooked neither opposition nor contradiction, nor indeed anything that he suspected to contain the slightest tinge of disparagement of his work or of his opinion, let alone of himself personally. Throughout the whole of his life Piranesi never lost an opportunity of eagerly advancing more than half-way to

meet any person who had the slightest inclination for a quarrel, and he was perpetually involved in some sort of dispute. Even the *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani*, with 44 plates and 200 pages of letterpress in Latin and Italian (a work which added considerably to his fame and which gained for him the "croce equestre"), was merely Piranesi's rejoinder in a controversy with Mariette, the author of *Delle Gemme incise degli Antichi.*

An argument had been started in the London *Investigator* in 1755, and to the discussion Piranesi contributed this work in defence of his assertion that Rome owed her monuments to Etruscan and not to Greek models, and that the Romans were not, as stated by the *Investigator*, a barbarous people before the conquest of Greece, or, in the words of the *Investigator*, "a gang of mere plunderers sprung from those who had been but a little while before their conquest of Greece naked thieves and runaway

slaves." As was his habit with everything in which he took an interest, Piranesi threw himself into an exhaustive study of the question. The result of his researches was that he became convinced that the Romans had taken their architectural models from the Etruscans rather than from the Greeks, and that long before the Romans had invaded Greece the principal Roman temples, aqueducts, and roads had been magnificently built with a correct knowledge of architecture and engineering, but that after the conquest greater splendour had been introduced into architectural work in Italy. This view he henceforward upheld under all circumstances against every one and on every occasion, never losing an opportunity of proclaiming his opinion on the subject aggressively and of championing it, when proclaimed, even to the limit of his powers of acrimonious expression. He was quite wrong in his views about Pæstum (page 15) in this connection, though

probably right in what he said about Rome. So important was the influence of these particular opinions on his work that it may perhaps be permitted to digress for a moment in order to consider how far modern research in Rome itself will be able to support Piranesi's views, seeing that during the 130 years that have elapsed since the etcher's death extensive explorations have been pushed forward in the Basilica Æmilia. These excavations are likely to have considerable bearing on Piranesi's theories, because near the Basilica is the Curia Julia, and not far from the Curia Julia is the spot upon which was built, about the year 640 B.C., the Curia Hostilia. When the time comes for laying bare the site of the Curia Julia modern archæologists anticipate that slabs will be found bearing records of the decrees of the Senate in the days of Tarquinius Priscus. These same slabs will be those known to have been removed from the Curia Hostilia and placed in the Curia



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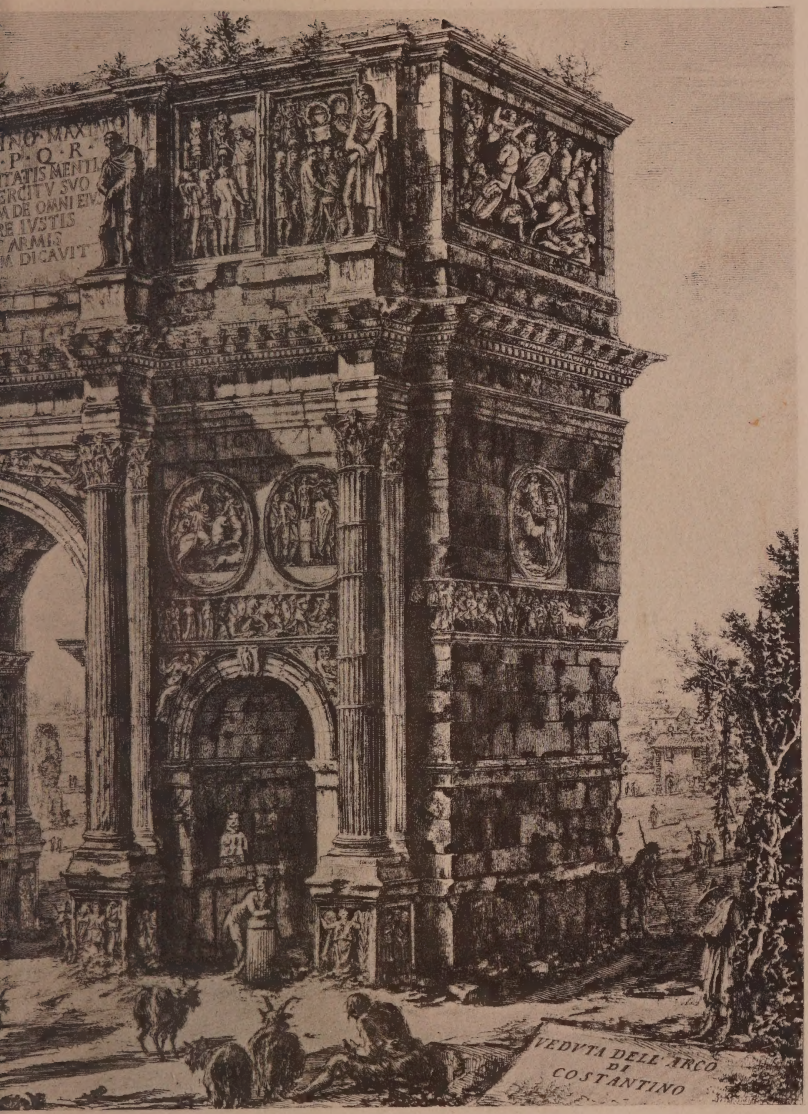


INE AT ROME.

Julia, and if they do actually bear Etruscan as well as Roman inscriptions they will afford strong evidence in support of Piranesi's opinions ; for, according to some authorities, Tarquinius Priscus, who greatly increased the number and dignity of the Senate, was not only of Etruscan birth, but it was he who conquered the twelve nations of Etruria. There is every reason, therefore, to assume that he was familiar with Etruscan characteristics and with the beauties of the national architecture, and that they appealed to one of Etruscan birth, with the consequence that he drew freely upon Etruscan models for ideas. Piranesi contended that, with such assistance, Tarquinius was enabled to lay the foundations of the Capitol, and to adorn Rome with the buildings of restrained magnificence which, at the end of several centuries, were regarded by Romans of Nero's day with admiration greater than that inspired by the buildings erected by

that stupendous artist himself. The Cloaca of Rome has always been said to have been built by the Etruscans in the time of the Roman kings, for the Etruscans were among the first in the use of the Arch,[1] and if other work, dating from the days of Tarquinius Priscus, can be brought to light, bearing bilingual inscriptions and treated with Etruscan feeling, the hypothesis of the Etruscan origin of the architecture of Rome, urged by Piranesi, will be placed almost beyond the region of doubt.

After the rupture with Vasi, Piranesi made his way back to Venice and endeavoured to earn a living there as an architect, studying at the same time under Tiepolo, who gave him instruction in historical painting. With Polanzani he studied figure design. Attaining, however,

[1] Professor Flinders Petrie discovered at Dendera in Egypt a passage 6 feet wide covered with barrel vaults dating from 3500 B.C. This is perhaps the earliest known example of the Arch. (See *Architecture of Greece and Rome*, by Anderson & Phené Spiers, p. 147.)

little financial success at Venice, he returned to Rome, and thence went to Naples to paint. But it soon became clear to him that his powers did not lie in that branch of art.

Interest in archæological matters was the chief reason for his journey to Naples. He visited Pæstum and Pompeii, and also Herculaneum, where excavations, begun by peasants in 1711, had been resumed in 1738, and then by the orders of Charles III. of the Two Sicilies. Although the Theatre at Herculaneum was below the level of the ground and in almost total darkness, his imagination and instinctive knowledge realised what the whole had originally been like. Using such information as the discoverers had by that time acquired, he made a plan of the Theatre, improvising details, of which there was no record, according to his own ideas of what the structure had been. In after years it was his intention to publish etchings of these researches, and he had

planned to proceed with them as soon as he had finished the etchings of Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. But he was overtaken by death while at work on the plates of Hadrian's Villa. The etchings of Herculaneum were eventually finished and published, in 1783, after his death, by his son Francesco, and dedicated to Gustavus III. of Sweden. There are evidences, however, that Francesco in this connection made use of Palladio's *Le Terme dei Romani.*

Perhaps Hadrian's Villa was the subject to which he devoted more time than to any other subject he took in hand. It covered an exceedingly large area, but he succeeded in arriving at a general plan of the entire Villa and in reconstituting it on paper, using for a basis such remains as existed. As time went on further discoveries were made, and Piranesi's plans, confirmed by fresh and elaborate measurements carried out by others, were regarded as masterpieces of inspiration.

TEMPLE OF

TUNE AT PAESTUM.

From Naples he went to Pæstum; he there surveyed the Temple of Neptune, and adduced what he called the unmistakable signs of Etruscan work present in that building to support his argument and opinion that the Etruscans had produced fine buildings long before the settlement of the Greeks in that part of Italy. Besides the Temple of Neptune at Pæstum there is one of Juno (or Ceres), and a Basilica; they are referred to in detail on page 134. They are all certainly of Doric origin. Apparently no ancient writer mentions them, and they were unknown to archæologists until they were referred to and described in 1745 by Antonini. Piranesi either did not know of or ignored the fact that, from a period dating, roughly, as far back as 750 years before the Augustan age, all Southern Italy was sown with important Dorian Greek cities. There were Crotona and Sybaris on the Bay of Tarentum, Pæstum itself being a colony of Sybaris. Locri

on the Adriatic was another great Dorian Greek city, and all of them were adorned with large temples similar to those at Pæstum. These temples differed materially from the Etruscan temples in the north of Italy ; not only were they much larger than the Etruscan temples, but they had at least one other very distinct difference, for while the columns in Doric temples had no bases Vitruvius states that there were bases to the columns in Etruscan temples.

Leaving Naples, Piranesi came north again to Rome, determined to settle in that city and to devote himself to engraving and etching.

At Rome he lived in great straits, which were intensified by his refusal to obey his father's wish that he should return to Venice and start afresh in his native city, the result of this refusal being the thrifty reprisal often associated with parental displeasure, the stoppage of the son's allowance.

Months passed in desultory but useful study of etching and painting, and although

he evidently desired to be able to paint, he finally realised that he did not possess the necessary ability, and gave up the attempt for good. No examples of painting by Piranesi are recorded, and there is no evidence to warrant the statement that some of the many pictures attributed to Marco Ricci or Pannini may possibly have been the work of Piranesi.

Thrown on his own resources, he directed all his powers to etching, and in about 1741, when he was twenty-one years old, published four romantic compositions of ruins framed in a decoration of scrolls and volutes of the type peculiar to the period. They are not dated, but they indicate where Piranesi was living; on them is his address — near the French Academy, in the Corso, opposite the Palazzo Doria Pamphili. These four compositions are often found in the volume entitled *Opere Varie* published by Bouchard in 1750. In 1748 were published the first of

his etchings which are dated; he called them *Antichità Romane de' Tempi della Repubblica e de' primi Imperatori*, etc. (*Archi Trionfali Antichi Tempi*, etc.). Roma 1748. They include 30 plates of views of several Roman buildings in the provinces, such as the Amphitheatre of Verona, and the Triumphal Arches of Pola in Istria, of Ancona, and of Rimini. He dedicated them to the literary antiquary Bottari, private chaplain to the etcher's patron, Pope Benedict XIV. Monsignore Bottari was the discoverer of the twelfth-century manuscript of *The Vision of Alberico*, from which, says Isaac D'Israeli, Dante had borrowed or stolen the *Inferno*.

These *Antichità* plates were afterwards re-issued, under the same date, with the title altered to *Alcune Vedute di Archi Trionfali*, etc., and two fresh plates by Francesco were added.

Fascinated even from the first moment of his arrival by the silent stones and shattered

monuments of Rome, Piranesi worked with the utmost diligence. Intensely interested by the scene, his heart and soul were set aglow with a feeling partly of pride and partly of awe at the splendour he gazed upon or imagined around him ; and it is indelibly stamped upon his earliest, as on his latest work, that his aim was not so much to imitate as to describe, to explain, to compel others to become conscious of, and to value, the noble beauty which stirred him to a passionate attachment.

He claimed that his etchings would bring him undying fame. "I do dare to believe," he wrote, "that, like Horace, I have executed a work which will go down to posterity, and which will endure for as long as there are men desirous of knowing all that has survived until our day, of the ruins of the most famous city of the universe." This is pompous. But at least the example of Milton may be quoted in Piranesi's defence. In his *Reasons of Church*

Government Milton in 1641–42 declares his resolution to take full time for meditation on a fit subject, and he informs the world that it may expect the production of a great poem from his pen, ". . . a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapour of wine, . . . nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her seven daughters, but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance, . . . to this must be added industrious and select reading, study, observation and insight into all seemly opinions, arts and affairs." Piranesi is self-conscious in good company. In the Preface of the *Antichità Romane* he says: "When I first saw the remains of the ancient buildings of Rome lying as they do in cultivated fields or in gardens and wasting away under the ravages of time, or being destroyed by greedy owners who sell them as materials for modern buildings, I determined to preserve them for ever by

means of my engravings, and the reigning Pope Benedict XIV. assisted me with his generosity and encouraged me in my labours."

Quite without means, he set poverty at defiance. He worked day and night, denying himself the proper sleep which a straw mattress—his sole worldly possession—might have afforded him. Juvenal's description of Codrus with his one bed and his statue of a Centaur, in a garret among the pigeons' nests, aptly fits the conditions under which Piranesi lived—

". . . quem tegula sola tuetur
a pluvia, molles ubi reddunt ova columbæ."

But, toiling with enthusiasm and with unconquerable perseverance, he burst through all difficulties. Models being beyond his means, he worked from grotesque figures and sights at hand in the streets, using cripples, and the meat hanging in the butchers' shops, as studies. Some of these

drawings were known to exist in the collection of Prince Rezzonico. Ragged beggars were special favourites with him, and, of their picturesqueness, he, afterwards, like the quaint-minded and impetuous Callot had done a century earlier, made effective use in his plates ; in some of the plates the costumes add interest.

A manuscript Life of Piranesi is said to have been in the possession of Priestley & Weale, publishers, of London, in 1830, but no trace can now be found of it. The details of his life, however, are written in his etchings ; without their aid there is little enough to be told about him personally. In his plates alone stand the records of each day's acts and thoughts, but the very copiousness of his output shows at once how little time was available wherein anything could happen to Piranesi in matters outside his workroom. Such incidents indeed as did occur were closely concerned with his etching needle. They

consisted mostly of quarrels and arguments ; as a rule they were about petty matters, and, unfortunately, with almost any person with whom he came in contact. The physical effort of producing by his own hand a work of great magnitude, and at the same time indulging in a personal disagreement or dispute about artistic technicalities, with this or that friend or foe, amply filled up his days. When he was not working and disputing simultaneously he was savagely disputing only, and when not disputing he was at work, etching with a relentless perseverance in defence of his latest contention.

His mark was made immediately the impressions from his first plates appeared. Assisted by a brilliant needle and a delicate touch, he conveyed his own enthusiasm to all who examined his work. At Rome it was soon perceived that he possessed the skill to deal with architectural subjects in a manner incomparably superior

to that in which such subjects had hitherto been treated. His fiery, contemptuous, quarrelsome disposition had made him conspicuous; a singularly facile and vigorous pencil now gained him distinction, and the growing fashion for archæological research was confirmed, if not set, by Piranesi.

His plates appeared with inscriptions disclosing a wealth of archæological information, and these inscriptions Bianconi, who wrote Piranesi's obituary notice in the *Antologia Romana*, states were the outcome of assistance from Bottari and the learned Jesuit Father Contucci. But various authorities, among others Tipaldo, contradict this allegation, and Piranesi's son, in after years, put forward documentary evidence to prove that not only was Piranesi quite capable of composing the inscriptions, but that he was well versed in a knowledge of both Latin and Greek. A quarrel with Volpi, respecting some temples, also proved his antiquarian know-

ledge, and, on the whole, the evidence goes to show that the inscriptions may be attributed to the etcher himself.

An excitable nature, stimulated by his ardent admiration for the remains of Rome, urged Piranesi to work with such impetuosity that, frequently, he had not the patience to devote any time to making studies or sketches. In many cases he simply drew his subject on the plate and completed it almost entirely by etching in aqua fortis, and with little assistance from the graver. This method accounts for the rapidity with which he threw off great numbers of etchings, most of them very large in size and crowded with architectural detail expressed in a manner calculated to arrest and retain the attention of the average man. He took great care to discover the point of view from which his subject would be regarded by the ordinary spectator. A master of perspective, he was able to carry conviction to the least technical eye. In the

estimation of his fellow-craftsmen he was distinguished by the peculiar skill which enabled him to convey the effect of distance by gradation of tone. With him the swelling line was employed continually for the purpose of obtaining bold contrasts, and this is the reason why his etchings gain so greatly in effect if hung on a wall as pictures, and at a distance, as compared with the effect produced on the eye when they are examined in a folio. Like Pannini, the chief point in his plates is usually the foreground; Piranesi throws great masses of buildings straight into the eye of the spectator.

Boldness of imagination and force of execution enabled him even to increase the majesty of a subject under treatment. He drew the side of a building or a row of columns in such a way that an effect of interminable distance was obtained ; and to add solemnity to ruins he cast over them festoons of weird foliage, now like ivy and now like

THE COLO

IM AT ROME.

seaweed. Dense foliage actually existed among the ruins; the monuments, aqueducts, tombs, and palaces of Rome were indeed covered with a jungle-like growth of trees, and Piranesi made full use of the mysterious effect lent by the vegetation.

The Rome of classical days still presented in the eighteenth century a mournful scene not alone of ruined but also of neglected magnificence. The noble splendour of her architecture was almost obliterated, and little was left of stately streets, once the pride of Augustus himself, to bear silent witness to having endured the blows of every indignity. That which had been the palace of the Cæsars Totila had reduced to a mound of rubbish, and the wind had sown it with a forest of tangled shrubs. The Forum, to whose decrees the whole world had bowed, was Cows' Field, and men spoke of the Capitol as Goats' Hill. Aqueducts, marvels of construction, bridged a desolated Campagna with such spans as had survived

mutilation by Vitiges. No more than a third of the Colosseum remained; it had been in turn a fortress, a stone quarry, a woollen mill, and a saltpetre factory. Smothered in weeds it had at length, with 420 different kinds of plants, trees, and shrubs, provided material for a botanical treatise entitled "The Flora of the Colosseum." A plantation of wild fig trees covered the arch of Titus, and foxes from the Campagna drank at the low basins of many a marble fountain. The Tiber had from time to time flooded Rome and earthquakes had shaken her to the foundations. But it was the hand of man that had done the worst. Norman Guiscard had burnt the city from end to end and from side to side; the Constable of Bourbon had sacked it; Lombards, Goths, Vandals, and Saracens had laid it waste. The builders of St. Peter's had pulled down the Septizonium of Severus and had used its stones for their own

purposes: the very tomb of the saint was indebted for a portion of its embellishment to columns cast from Roman Imperial bronze knaved[1] from the Pantheon. The Popes and their kinsfolk had desecrated and devastated the buildings of classical Rome with ruthless hands, and that which they had left undone had been accomplished by hordes of those barbarians whose invasions were, according to Machiavelli, often the outcome of Papal invitation or connivance.

Such then were the materials out of which had been composed the scene that presented itself when Piranesi first looked upon Rome.

Most people are incapable of transferring to paper the representation of an object before them, many cannot even draw a double cube in perspective. To such persons the facility with which Piranesi has drawn compositions and improvised subjects, architect-

[1] By Urban VIII. (Barberini); "*quod non fecerunt barbari fecerunt Barberini.*"

ural and natural, involving intricate treatment of perspective, will appear to be what Mr. Gladstone would have described as "devilish." To some the fascinating effects of Piranesi's skilful perspective are wont to give rise to an uneasy suspicion that it is the result of a trick, or sleight of hand, and these will regard his work as a sceptical public usually regards the minutely carved boxwood nuts and rosary beads to be seen in the Waddesdon Room at the British Museum, with admiration based upon wonder, and will not receive from it an æsthetic sensation produced by appreciation of the Beautiful.

There is a picturesque, if unconfirmed, legend that, in order the better to obtain the light and shade effects, Piranesi studied by daylight the scene he proposed to etch, half completed the plate, and then, having saturated his memory with the details necessary for the picture, finished the plate at night, on the spot, by the light of a full moon. In many cases he imparted a studied

disorder into the treatment of the details so as to render the plate more interesting.

He dealt indiscriminately with subjects of all kinds, reproducing ancient ruins as well as standing buildings of more recent date. He took minute and accurate measurements, and many of the etchings contain a multitude of measured details of ancient and mediæval architecture, of which, up to his day, there had existed absolutely no record. In respect of these details alone Piranesi is of the utmost value to the architect of to-day, and particularly to the student of the early Renaissance.

It is difficult to estimate the whole extent to which Piranesi depended on others for artistic assistance. Not all the plates were entirely his own unassisted work. The figures in some of Piranesi's plates were etched by Jean Barbault, more particularly in those plates dealing with sepulchral monuments, and as Barbault's name appears on such plates in addition to that of Piranesi,

the amount of his assistance can be readily ascertained. There are three plates in the *Antichità Romane* engraved by Girolamo Rossi—one of the three was drawn by Antonio Buonamini. Piranesi took pupils, employing them to help him, and among those whom he taught was Piroli, a man of considerable parts. Beyond Barbault's work the assistance from pupils and others could not have amounted to much. Piranesi's style was of so individual a character that were there any important work by another hand it could be easily detected in the etchings. Little or no such traces are to be found in the etchings, and, as none of Piranesi's pupils have produced work which had caught Piranesi's style, it may be assumed that if work other than Piranesi's were present in the vital portions of a plate it would be noticed without difficulty. His pupil Piroli is well known as a friend of the gentle-spirited John Flaxman, R.A. He did part of the work for Flaxman's illustra-

tions of Homer, Dante, Æschylus, and Hesiod, under Flaxman's personal supervision.

Towards the end of Piranesi's life his children were of assistance; but of his five children only two were old enough, before their father's death, to be of real help, namely, Francesco, born in 1748, and Laura, born in 1750. They both etched somewhat in their father's style, and Francesco did fair work, as may be best seen in the Pæstum etchings; a diligent craftsman, he possessed to some extent the power by which his father's work is marked, but in imagination and taste he was entirely lacking. After their father's death they turned to print-selling more than to producing, and Francesco and Laura, joined by their brother Pietro, published at Rome a quantity of engravings, and among them several sets of Piroli's engravings.

The frontispiece of this volume is reproduced from a portrait of Piranesi which his son Francesco engraved after the painting of Guisseppe Cades. Francesco etched the

Il Teatro d'Ercolano plates which were presumably made up from his father's drawings, with the assistance of Palladio's *Le Terme dei Romani.* These etchings show the relative difference in the quality of the father's ability as compared with that of the son. But in any event, however good Francesco may be considered, he suffers by comparison, as is usually the case where a son has to compete with his father's reputation.

Piroli the pupil drew the statue executed by Angelini which sometimes appears bound up with the works of Piranesi ; the plate was engraved by Francesco.[1] The statue itself was erected in the Priorato di Malta which was at one time connected with the Church of Santa Maria Aventina. It is mentioned by Baron Stolberg in his *Travels.* This church Piranesi restored about the year 1765, and there he lies buried, although immediately after death his body was taken to S. Andrea della Fratte, where

[1] A reproduction of this plate is given in this volume.

it remained till it was decided that Santa Maria Aventina should be its final resting-place. There existed in Rome, and there is no reason to suppose that it has been destroyed, but it cannot be traced, a bust of Piranesi by Alessandro D'Este, the cost of which Canova defrayed. It used to stand in the Palace of the Conservatori. His contemporary Bianconi declares the bust to be a bad likeness.

Santa Maria del Popolo also is one of Piranesi's restorations. Restorers, justly or unjustly, do not as a rule seem to be favourites with mankind; but in the case of Santa Maria del Popolo the restorer has left little or no opening for fault-finding. How reverently and well he did his work is proved by the fact that Santa Maria del Popolo, notwithstanding the restorations, is still considered by students to contain original specimens of the most splendid types of Renaissance Art. But Lanciani condemns Piranesi's restoration of Il

Priorato, calling it a mass of monstrosities, inside and out. On the whole, however, he did very little work as a practical architect. He accepted the patronage of the Rezzonico Pope Clement XIII., also a Venetian, who made him Cavaliere (16th Jan. 1767), and for whom he carried out a few restorations, and whose portrait he executed.

Piranesi's etchings found ready buyers, but the largeness of the output rendered the pecuniary return to the artist extremely small. The supply being copious, it was necessary to stimulate demand by charging usually only the modest price of 2½ paoli (about 2s.) for each etching, however large. Thus his very industry was a disadvantage to him, for the important reason that he had to earn a living. In the case of some artists it would seem that idleness possesses a certain pecuniary advantage.

His first dated publication, dedicated to Bottari, dated 1748, and referred to on p. 17 as bearing his address, contained 30 plates.

The complete set was priced at the miserable pittance of 16 paoli, or about 13s. 4d.

It was with the utmost difficulty during the early part of his life that he was able to pay his way. A wife, curiously enough, proved almost his salvation, bringing as she did a small dowry.

Piranesi's courtship is in consonance with his well-known character, and is all of a piece with everything else he did. The story is told that he was sitting in the Forum at work drawing: his eye fell by chance on a girl who happened to be passing; she was with her brother. Without leaving his seat, he asked them who they were. The boy replied that they were the children of Prince Corsini's gardener. To Piranesi the girl's black eyes and her features were an instant proof that she was descended from the ancient Romans, and that she therefore fulfilled the ideal he had fixed in his mind of what his wife should be. Later the knowledge that

she possessed a dowry of 150 piastres (about £12, 5s. 0d.) seems to have convinced him that his first impressions were correct. After hearing from the brother who they were, he rose to his feet and asked the girl if she were free to marry. She said she was, and the matter was at once settled so far as Piranesi's own intentions were concerned. After this one interview with the person whom he had thus hastily decided to make his wife, he bluntly asked her to marry him. Such impetuosity, while it scared both the girl and her parents, effectively prevented them from raising objections or creating obstacles. Piranesi was able to gain his point at once, and, as usual, devoid of patience, he wasted no further time, and the couple were married five days later. The courtship had been one of under a week.

One is reminded of Cellini.

Nor was it, apparently, at all unusual in Italy during the eighteenth century to

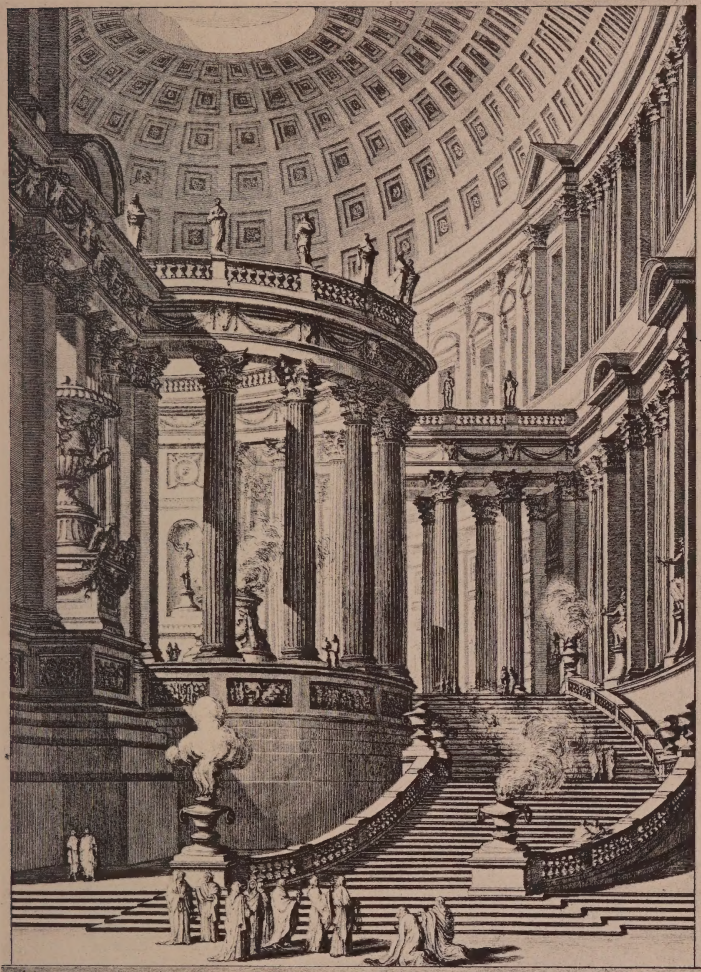
arrange matrimonial and other matters in this impetuous fashion. It is narrated of Carlo Goldoni, the Molière of Italy, who was born a dozen years before Piranesi's birth, that he had decided to marry, but on recalling an old saying, came to the conclusion that the delightful woman whom he loved might possibly develop the ugliness of her elder sister, and imagining his own disgust in such an eventuality, gave her up. The story goes that a few days later seeing by chance a pretty young woman on a balcony, Goldoni bowed to her with great tenderness, to which she made response with the utmost fervour and equal modesty. Not a moment was lost, a conversation ensued, the girl told Goldoni that she had no mother alive, but that her father might possibly be found at a café hard by. Off went Goldoni to the café, found the father, offered a theatre ticket or two and himself as a son-in-law, and settled matters without further ado.

His wife's dowry enabled Piranesi to procure materials and to follow out his intention of illustrating the Antiquities of Rome, and notwithstanding the husband's irritable disposition and jealous temperament the happiness of the union was such as to show that possibly the matter of the 150 piastres might not have been an incentive to the courtship and marriage. In the early days of their married life they occupied, in the Palazzo Tomati, near the Trinità de' Monti, the rooms which, in after years, were inhabited by Thorwaldsen, whence all his succeeding plates were issued; the first dated plate from that address is of the year 1750.

The *Opere Varie*, published by Bouchard and dated from the Palazzo Tomati, near the Trinità de' Monti, 1750, bear Piranesi's adopted Arcadian title "Salcindio Tiseio," as well as his name and the words "Architetto Veneziano," for he never permitted it to be forgotten that Venice was his native

TEMPLE OF

SIBYL AT TIVOLI.



Tempio antico inventato e disegnato alla maniera di quelli che si fabbricavano in onore della Dea Vesta; quindi vedesi in mezzo la grand'Ara, sopra della quale conservavasi dalle Vergini Vestali l'inestinguibile fuoco sacro. Tutta l'opera è Corintia ornata di statue e di bassi rilievi, e di altri ornamenti ancora. Il piano di questo Tempio è notabilmente elevato dal suolo: vedesi in mezzo la Cella rotonda, come lo è pure tutto il gran Vaso del Tempio stesso: quattro loggie portavano ad essa, e per altrettante scale vi si ascendeva. Le parieti del gran Tempio hanno due ordini, sopra il secondo s'incurva una vasta Cupola con sfondati, e rosoni, e termina in una grande apertura, dalla qle dipende il lume alla Cella che le sta sotto.

Gio Batta Piranesi Arch.ra inv. ed inciso in Roma l'Anno 1743 15

COMPOSITION FROM "OPERE VARIE.

city. This volume shows the influence of Pannini's style : there are the broken altars, fractured columns, shattered pediments, and the slab bearing the incised name of the etcher, the whole composition thrown together just as Pannini would have painted the picture. Sometimes bound up in this volume is a series of imaginative designs for palaces, temples, and national buildings, perhaps intended as examples to be shown to possible clients, private or public. This volume also contains the *Carceri*, to which reference is made later on.

The *Raccolta di Varie Vedute* was published in the next year, 1751, by Bouchard, and comprised 93 plates. Of the 93 plates 47 are the work of Piranesi, and they do not appear to have been included in any other volume of Piranesi's etchings ; a few of them, however, are to be found, reduced to quarto size, in a volume by Venuti, issued in 1766. The *Raccolta di Varie Vedute* is a somewhat scarce volume, and the British

Museum copy, though otherwise perfect, does not possess a title-page.

It was Piranesi's custom to shut himself up in his own room and to work straight on, without intermission, if an idea had struck him, or if he had a subject in hand: he had no patience. Engrossed in his labours, he could not endure to lay down his tools to take food or rest. He worked on, regardless of time and forgetful of his own or his children's bodily wants. There is also a domestic picture which shows him as a tyrannical father exercising the rights of the Roman paterfamilias with the utmost rigour. But these traits were not the only reason for the fact that Piranesi's children occasionally went hungry: his means in the early years of their childhood were very slender. The entire earnings of his whole life were not large. Temanza possessed, and quoted, a letter from Piranesi to his sister dated eight months prior to the etcher's death. After years of struggle,

years crowded with work, he wrote in 1778 that he had received during the forty years since his arrival in Rome 50 or 60 thousand scudi (or in English money an average of roughly £250 to £300 a year), and that he had been able out of these earnings to live and to maintain his wife and children, pay for materials to equip his studio and to get together his collection of vases, urns, and so on. If £250 or £300 was the average annual income of the forty years, which included those years during which he was reaping the benefit of the reputation he had won, the earnings in the early years must have been meagre indeed. The collection of vases, urns, and bas-reliefs was really a part of his working tools, indispensable models, the actual cost of which must have been considerable ; so, after taking the cost into account and calculating the outlay for materials, it will be found that the balance remaining with which Piranesi met personal

and domestic disbursements during those forty years, can be gauged within narrow limits.

The Papal authorities regarded his researches and etchings with admiration and approbation. Published with certain of his etchings there is a formal testimonial, dated 1756, from D. Michael Angelo Monsagrati, Counsellor of the Index, who says that he has examined Piranesi's work and has found nothing therein contrary to religion and morality ; recognising the excellence of the explanations and descriptions, he judges it worthy to be proclaimed of public utility on the ground that there existed no work on Roman Antiquities of equal clearness and brevity. The word "brevity" does not appear to be in accord with facts. The Pope occasionally bought a set of the etchings for presentation to distinguished visitors to Rome ; and Piranesi narrates, contentedly enough, in a letter to his sister, that he was accustomed to receive from the Papal Court for eighteen huge volumes of etchings

200 scudi, or roughly £40. The cost in time and material of taking the impressions from the plates must have amounted, at the very least, to half that sum.

Piranesi worked for all sorts of employers, and for some in connection with subject-matter which had little to do with external architecture. Of these employers perhaps Robert Adam was the most important. It was Piranesi who executed for Adam certain plates for the book published by Robert Adam and his brother, dealing with architecture, furniture, and the interior decorations of buildings. In this connection he is perhaps the most vital link in a chain of English furniture designers.

Mr. John Swarbrick, in his Prize Essay, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Robert Adam and his Brothers*, says "concerning the plates No. IV, Vol. 2 of the Works" (1779), Robert Adam has written :—

"Four of these plates are engraved by Piranesi, and are the largest he has ever

attempted in regular Architecture. This obligation from so ingenious an Artist we owe to that friendship we contracted with him during our long residence at Rome, and which he has taken every occasion to testify in the most handsome manner."

From what has of late been learnt about Piranesi's connection with Robert Adam and the group of artists who surrounded him, it may now be said, with some show of truth, that the style of decoration, and more particularly in the case of furniture, associated with Adam's name may be better described as "Piranesi" than "Adam." Both, of course, were ardent admirers of the Classic, and both drew their ideas from that one common source; but Piranesi's etchings, the outcome of his devotion to the Antique, were the vehicle by which, at that time, fresh phrases of design and detail were conveyed to Adam's mind, and it may be asserted with some

degree of certainty that, but for the means provided by Piranesi's genius, Adam's reputation to-day would not be as high as it actually is. Every one knows the passage in Molière's *L'Avare* where Valère, the lover of the Miser's daughter, tells Maître Jacques, the cook, that most people can produce a good dinner where money is of no account, whereas the cook who is truly great is he who can produce a good dinner with but slender means with which to go to market. Adam had been furnished with almost unlimited means from which to produce his effects, and he should be measured by the standard set up by Valère. So far as I can ascertain, Piranesi's connection with Robert Adam came about as follows. Adam spent three years (1754–57) in Italy and Dalmatia, during which time he examined the remains of Roman architecture in Italy generally and visited Spalato. Having made the acquaintance of Winckelmann, Adam became intimate with Clérisseau, a

great friend of Winckelmann, and, through him, with Chambers, who was a pupil of Clérisseau. This was Sir William Chambers, referred to in relation to Clérisseau on page 90. He had travelled to England with Clérisseau in 1755. After Adam's return home from the visit which he and Clérisseau paid together to Spalato in 1757, they produced the work styled the *Ruins of the Palace Diocletian at Spalatro*, the figures in that work being drawn by Antonio Zucchi ; Bartolozzi also helped, by engraving several of the plates.

Now Antonio Zucchi became eventually the husband of Angelica Kauffmann, and she had then lately etched a portrait of Winckelmann, who was reaching the highest pinnacle of fame in the estimation of every one, from Goethe downwards, for his knowledge on all matters pertaining to Art.

Adam made the acquaintance of these and other artists and engravers while abroad, bringing some of them to England and

associating himself with them in his own work. These folks formed the nucleus of the circle from which radiated that type of decoration associated with the names of Adam, Sheraton, Pergolesi, Pastorini, Bartolozzi, Cipriani, and Ceracchi, and which gradually pervaded English furniture and engravings as well as bricks, mortar, stone, marble, stucco, and metal. Most of these names have an everyday familiarity about them. Ceracchi's, however, is not well known; he did the relief-work for the interior of Adam's houses. His was a weird character. He ended his life under the guillotine in Paris, dressed as a Roman Emperor, having been convicted of complicity in a plot to murder Bonaparte. Antonio Zucchi, who became in 1781 the husband of Angelica Kauffmann, after the death of the fraudulent footman Brandt who had been her first husband, designed the frontispiece of the brothers Adam's book, and Bartolozzi engraved it. Angelica

Kauffmann "of graceful fancy" executed various kinds of decorative painting on furniture, walls, and ceilings for the Adam brothers; her name is well known in that particular connection. Zucchi was not an artist of great merit, but he handled architectural subjects well, and was one of the party who went with Adam to Dalmatia. In Lord Derby's collection at Knowsley there are two large pictures painted by him for the 12th Earl to commemorate the marriage of Lord Stanley with Lady Betty Hamilton, and they are in Piranesi's style of design. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1770. With these artists Piranesi was in continual and close touch, and into this circle of talent, drawn together while in Italy by Robert Adam, for the purpose of illustrating his *Works in Architecture*, Adam brought his friend Piranesi. Adam's *Works* appeared in 1778; Piranesi since 1762, at least, had been on terms of intimate friendship with Robert

Adam, and it is not at all improbable that Adam had interested himself in the election in 1757 of Piranesi to the Society of Antiquaries in London.

It will be noticed that at even so late a date as 1757 it was to artists of foreign birth that Adam had to turn for the assistance he required. Most of these artists were Roman Catholics and had been trained upon work designed for the adornment of buildings connected with their faith. British Art had suffered severely through the dispersal of the monasteries and from the attacks on the Roman Catholic religion in England. From the date of the dissolution of the religious houses until nearly the third quarter of the eighteenth century Nature was either niggard in bestowing or was hindered in developing the talent of British-born painters and sculptors. Either or both of these views may be correct. In any case the strife that raged round religion in England, during the period indicated, pre-

vented native-born talent from perfecting itself in the arts which have always found kindly patronage among members of a Church whose leaders have systematically addressed themselves to the encouragement of music, painting, and sculpture. This encouragement was, probably, due to the fact that the papacy regarded Science as incompatible with its pretensions and hostile to its dogmas.

Whether from natural causes or owing to political or other reasons, for several generations British genius flowed into the channels of Science rather than into those of Art. Macaulay has pointed out how native talent, diverted from painting and sculpture, stimulated by the example of Bacon, reappeared in the illustrious men whose names are associated with the foundation and early years of the Royal Society. By the beginning of the eighteenth century researches into the realms of Nature, led by Newton, Halley, Petty, Boyle, Sloane, Wallis, and

others, had placed England in a position in regard to scientific matters second to none among the nations of the world. But what of native artists? From the time of the Augsburg Holbein no British name of note can be recalled to adorn the roll of painters and sculptors till Hogarth redeemed British painting from the reproach that it was under foreign domination, and till Banks, Nollekens, and Flaxman proved that Englishmen knew the way in which to handle a chisel. If Wren be put forward and claimed as an artist it must of course be admitted that he was a Titan. But Architecture, although Mistress of all the Arts, is as much a Science as an Art, and should not be considered in the same light as painting and sculpture; for however entrancing may be the beauties of architectural design, or however impressive the spectacle of architectural mass, the efforts of the architect are both worthless and meaningless unless they have been rendered feasible by the calcula-

tions of the mathematician and useful by the assistance of the engineer. Wren must therefore be placed for the moment outside the argument, for he was both engineer and mathematician as well as artist. Let us see who then were the artists and sculptors whose names stand out during those years in which the men connected with the Royal Society were rendering London the pivot of the scientific world. From Holbein's day till 1760, the year in which the Society of Arts held its first Exhibition, few British names can be discovered. There is Cooper, but Cornelius Jonson was really Janssen Van Ceulen. Vandyck was a Fleming, Lely a Dutchman (from Soest near Utrecht, though some authorities persist in describing him as a Westphalian); Kneller was a German. Then there were the two Dutch Vanderveldes. The vulgar Verrio (see p. 108) who painted frescoes framed into spurious architectural compositions, was from Lecce, near Otranto,

where Baroc architecture may be seen at its best. His friend Laguerre, with his 'sprawling saints' as Pope called them, was from Paris, and had Louis XIV. as his godfather. How seldom it is recollected that Grinling Gibbons the carver and sculptor was not a native of Deptford but was born in Holland, and that Cibber who executed the Phœnix over the South Door of St. Paul's Cathedral and the large bas-relief on the pedestal of Wren's Monument of London, and who was the father of Colley Cibber, was born in Holstein, and that during the days when the illustrious Newton was at the Mint it was necessary to employ French skill in order to produce suitable designs for the coins of this realm. And it was not that the successes of painters and sculptors were badly recompensed in England, or that those who professed these arts were regarded as being placed low in the social scale. The contrary was the case: great social consideration was a

portion of their reward ; their attainments were honoured and their skill respected ; the pay of the painter was of so lavish a kind that foreign artists, many of whom were failures in the country of their birth, lost no time in invading this country, attracted by the scale on which labours such as theirs were rewarded.

The fact is there was no nursery in Britain for native talent, and Adam had no British material to which to turn.

Four of the most attractive and characteristic plates in Adam's book were engraved by Piranesi. They illustrate Sion House, and are referred to by Adam as being the largest Piranesi had ever attempted in regular architecture. With this book the public nowadays is familiar, and none of the plates will be found, on comparison, to excel those of Piranesi in the expression of the special æsthetic characteristic of which the epithet "Adam" is usually predicated. Adam's work, published with the collaboration of

his staff who produced the illustrations, rendered invaluable services to the masters of the styles of English furniture, after the middle of the eighteenth century, to the cabinetmaker and architect of that period.

Piranesi's etchings of the Classic and of the Renaissance, thrust forward by an aggressive personality, spread broadcast the elements which illustrated the doctrines other men were preaching. Thus the less æsthetic minds were helped into taking part in a movement towards appreciation of the Classic form which has become absorbed into everything put forward by the masters who teach us how to adorn our daily existence. His etchings first opened the eyes of many to the beauty of fine architecture and did work which learned essays failed to accomplish.

Piranesi's unexpected influence peeps out from all sorts of famous work. In Mr. Hind's *History of Engraving and Etching* it is stated (pp. 240–42) that in

the hands of John Crome (old Crome) etching was "sounder in principle than almost anything that had been produced in Europe for more than a century." John Crome and his fellow-townsman, John Sell Cotman, the other great artist of the Norwich School, were simultaneously at work at Norwich on soft and hard ground etching, and Cotman produced his etchings of architectural antiquities under the influence of "his professed model Piranesi." This fact of Piranesi being used by the Norwich School shows how versatile were the Norwich men in their power to produce the almost poetical softness of their landscapes alongside of formal draughtsmanship modelled on Piranesi.

Architecture and architectural ornament finely drawn by this one man enabled innumerable other men to design fine architecture and fine furniture. To those other men his work was a fitting textbook, rich in formulæ, easy both of access

CANDELABRUM FROM "VASI CANDELABRI, ETC."

and comprehension. His ideas, interpretations, and details, again, were as useful to the architect and draughtsman as are the services of the refiner to the worker in metal. The rough ingot, by Piranesi's help and influence and by his fortunate association with Adam and Adam's circle, became, in the hands of the craftsman or architect, the beautiful work of art as we know it, and an idiom of design. Moreover, in Piranesi's day the architect was to this extent so important a personage that his labours did not end when he had finished building the house and decorating it. To influence the architect was to direct, or at least to lend colour to, a great deal of domestic life ; the house, the garden, the cradle, the desk, the church, the wedding dress, the couch, the tombstone, were all included in the work for which the architect's imagination was responsible. In times which were ripe for a revised appreciation of the Classic the influence of

Piranesi may have been unsuspected, but designs bearing the unmistakable impress of his mind and hand passed one by one into circulation as the current coin of every-day use in decoration.

The antiquarian enthusiasm and investigation of Piranesi and the opportunity afforded him of giving the result of them to the English world through the channel of Adam's work, assisted Adam and his friends to create and develop the style which became popular, not only in architecture but in furniture.

Much furniture now and always described as being of the style of the well-known designers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century derives its special feeling and characteristic ornamentation from Piranesi's influence, and there are many examples of splendid English Furniture, made of mahogany, which are called "Chippendale," "Lock," "Chambers," "Adam," or by some other contempo-

In Inghilterra presso il Signor Dalton Cavaliere Inglese

TRIPOD AND VASE FROM "VASI CANDELABRI, ETC."

raneous name, constructed of material and with workmanship of the most honest and expensive kind, which might well be described as "Piranesi" furniture. Such are the pieces which have hitherto successfully baffled the collector who has attempted to assign to them a definite period, origin, or style. In design they usually resemble Adam too closely to be called "Chippendale," and are too much like "Chippendale" to be called "Adam"; as a rule they are evidently not so old as to be what is known as an original "Adam" or "Chippendale" piece "of the period"; nor do they look as if they had been made from characteristic Chippendale or Adam designs even though at a date later than that with which those two designers are identified. That is an important point.

In the Soane Museum, among the many original drawings by Robert Adam, are the designs of some chairs and sofas made

by him for Sir Laurence Dundas which are quite unlike in feeling and decorative detail anything usually called "Adam" furniture. They exhibit every characteristic one would expect Piranesi to have inspired, and are impregnated with the perfume he had distilled from the Antique. Now the designs for these chairs and sofas were made by Adam just before 1764, at a time when Adam and Piranesi were in close touch with each other. To my mind the extent to which Adam was influenced and even dominated by Piranesi is at once patent in these designs for Sir Laurence Dundas. Since 1764 many celebrated cabinet-makers have produced fine furniture, the style and period of which have baffled the collector. There is no great difficulty about the explanation. These cabinet-makers have merely adopted Adam's method: they have fixed upon the form or shape required and then, going a step further, have taken Piranesi's etchings and blended his idioms

into their designs; consequently, when judgment finds difficulty in placing a name upon an uncommonly well-made piece of furniture, fine in design and treatment, the words "inspired by Piranesi" are often the solution, where our description "Adam" or "Chippendale" would be incorrect.

This kind of furniture is somewhat more sober than Chippendale. In Chippendale designs the carving had gradually become very exuberant, and, whether in the Gothic, Chinese, Classic, or Rococo (Baroc[1]) style, it was inclined to show a lack of restraint and to convey the impression of noisiness. Furniture with the Piranesi feeling avoids that fault; it is likewise free from the coldness, timidity, and bloodlessness that often render Adam insipid. In particular the carvings are more interesting and the mouldings softer to the eye and hand, indeed especially so to the touch.

[1] Baroc suggests to the mind the same order of ideas as Rococo.

The publication of Piranesi's Roman etchings and the admiration they inspired tempered the tendency prevailing in Chippendale's day, not only in architectural composition in Europe generally, but also among the English furniture makers, to slip away towards the Rococo. The designer of enrichment, after seeing Piranesi's etchings, felt irresistibly compelled by the veneration for the Antique imparted by Piranesi, *simplex munditiis*, to moderate his excesses in "Periwig and Pigtail."[1] The period which saw the decline and fall of the Rococo in art, literature, and morals owed a greater debt to Piranesi's influence upon architecture

[1] The Church of St. Paul and St. Louis at Paris is a fair example of Rococo. In Rococo, or what is the same thing, Baroc, it was considered necessary to keep as closely as possible to the columnar orders, but gradually an opposite tendency had crept in and meaningless forms were used. Although the Antique was resorted to, it was not in such a way as to accord with the original intention, and the resulting effect was called "Periwig and Pigtail."

and the kindred arts than it was ever aware of. Indeed, it may be advanced with some certainty that the lines along which the composition and designs of Piranesi furniture move show plainly enough that as much toll was taken from Piranesi's etchings of the Antique as from the Antique itself.

The points to be noticed in what may be called a piece of "Piranesi" furniture are as follows. There is a noble simplicity of outline, which is at the same time treated in such a way as to be entirely English in character. All the carved mouldings are those usually found on Classic stone-work; somewhere in the piece there is a suggestion of Renaissance feeling, or inspiration, lending lightness, colour, and saliency to the whole, either in a pediment, frieze, panel edge, plinth, foot, or in any spot where a piece made from Chippendale's designs would be found heavy, dull, and uninteresting. Whenever it is thus present, the touch of

DETAILS FROM "VA

Fregio, che si vede all'Oratorio contiguo alla Scala Santa

Sezione della stessa

Fregio antico di pietra con putta, e fanciulli in terra cotta, ritrovati nella Villa Adriana in Tivoli

A

drawers and fittings made of mahogany, or of oak, or of scented cedar, though in most cases of oak or mahogany, and, if of the latter, it is polished, but less highly than the outside work.

The same may be said of many specimens of the painted furniture attributed to Adam or Pergolesi, which contain similar and additional evidences of inspiration in design and treatment from Piranesi's etchings. As a rule the foundation is mahogany, and the enamel or paint ("japan" was the correct word used in the old days) laid on it. Usually the body colour is a delicate cream or canary or green of an uncommon shade ; the edges of the piece are moulded, carved, and touched with gilding. Distributed over the flat surfaces are panels painted with classical subjects or flowers, with subjects contained in Piranesi's etchings, and particularly with those found in his volume of designs called *Diverse Maniere d'Adornare i Cammini ed ogni altra parte degli*

Edifizi, etc. (published in 1769, with text in English, French, and Italian), and also in the etchings of ceilings at the Villa Adriana. Sometimes engravings by Bartolozzi or others, applied to the surface, appear in panels and centres of the furniture. Owing to the excellence of the material employed in most of this kind of furniture, and to the gemlike quality of the decoration, the specimens themselves, even though they may not have been preserved with affection and care, are often found in such perfect condition as to have the appearance of having been recently made.

In the *Diverse Maniere* are a series of designs for mantelpieces, one of which was for Burghley. These are perhaps the least desirable of all Piranesi's designs and compositions. Over-decoration, meaningless ornament, lack of self-restraint, unpleasing design, grotesque without being useful or interesting, are all crowded into schemes which it would be nearly impossible actually

to reproduce. Yet among these very grave faults there is to be found much that is instructive; many small decorative details can be picked out and used for other work, and Adam and Pergolesi availed themselves of the opportunity. These designs illustrate how prolific was the genius of the man: although they embrace a hundred different sketches, each design is entirely different in detail from the others. It was on this series, says Mr. R. Phené Spiers in an article on "Chimneypieces" (*Encycl. Brit.*, 1910), that, at a later date, the Empire style in France was based.

I am far from contending that Adam had borrowed Piranesi's work in its entirety and built a reputation on it. Yet, if the student will take Adam's book, published in 1778, and compare it, for example, with Piranesi's volume of designs published in 1769, and if, further, he will examine the drawings of the Dundas chairs and sofas made by Adam in 1764 and now in the

Soane Museum, he will be able to judge for himself who was the master and who the disciple, and he will wonder why Piranesi's name is not now used where that of Adam is usually mentioned.

Mr. Percy Macquoid, in his *History of English Furniture*, "The Age of Satinwood," p. 47, says: "In comparing the designs of Piranesi and Adam it is at once apparent how the former originated and the latter improved and adapted this Italian style to English requirements. There are pages of Piranesi's drawings that Adam reproduced fearlessly as his own, enlarging and simplifying the details of the originals." This last sentence goes perhaps a little too far.

As early even as 1762 the terms of friendship existing between the two men must have been of a cordial character, for they were of a kind sufficient to warrant so signal a token of regard as a dedication by Piranesi to one whom he describes in the most prominent position in the plates as "the

celebrated British architect, Robert Adam." Adam's name is set out in bold lettering, not once but several times, in the one set of plates forming the *Campus Martius Antiquæ Urbis*. Moreover, in one of these plates, and in a position of honour, is the representation of a medal bearing the names and profiles of Piranesi and Adam side by side.

The *Campus Martius* series was etched merely to please himself, and was largely the outcome of Piranesi's fertile imagination. He studied the Classics, and following the indications of writers of the period, wrote an essay on the history of the Campus Martius, described its buildings, drew a plan of the site, and covered a map with exact details of imagined monuments, tombs, baths, temples, and porches, without having found a single trace that anything of the kind had ever existed.

On the *Campus Martius* title-page Piranesi describes himself, and is evidently very proud of the distinction, as a Fellow

of the Royal [*sic*] Society of Antiquaries of London, of which Society he was elected an Honorary Fellow on the 7th of April 1757. Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, the late Assistant Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, has been kind enough to furnish me with the following extract from Minute Book VIII. 8 :—

"*Thursday*, 24*th February* 1757.

"Testimonials were severally presented recommending . . . and also Il Signor Giovanni Battista Piranesi, a Venetian, resident at Rome, a most ingenious Architect, and Author of the *Antiquities in Rome and the Neighbourhood*, v Vols folio, and desirous of being admitted an Honorary Member of this Society. Signed severally by R. Ossory, T. Theobald, P. Collinson, A. Cooper, A. Pond, H. Barker, C. Rogers, W. Norris."

Notwithstanding its many faults, the volume of *Diverse Maniere* referred to above, so useful to furniture makers and furniture

painters, is the long neglected parent of a delightful progeny, which has been fathered upon Adam, if not even adopted by him, as his own offspring, earning praise for the putative parent to which the latter is not wholly entitled. This volume too has also been of value in influencing furniture design, but in another direction, and examination of its plates will help to confirm an observation of R. S. Clouston, who made most valuable investigations into the history of English furniture. In writing of Adam he says that in Chippendale's third edition of *The Director* the ram's head decoration occurs, that this form of decoration is a great favourite of Adam's and that it was Chippendale's habit to absorb the ideas of others into his designs, after having "elevated and refined" them. Now Adam returned from Italy about the year 1757, and it was from Adam, who worked in conjunction with Chippendale, that the fundamental idea of the ram's head was acquired by Chippen-

dale for the third edition of Chippendale's *Director*, which appeared in 1762. Adam had drawn his ram's head designs under the influence of Piranesi. Further, it must always be borne in mind that both Robert Adam and his brother James were employed to design furniture which Chippendale made, and which passes by the name of the latter ; many pieces of furniture now called Chippendale owe their design undoubtedly to the drawing-board of one or other of the brothers Adam. Later on they applied themselves to designing on their own account the furniture which is now known by their name. This fact is usually overlooked, nor is it generally known that the renowned furniture belonging to Lord Harewood and to Lord St. Oswald respectively, was made by Chippendale, not from his own designs, but from designs supplied by the brothers Adam. As to Nostell Priory, Sir Rowland Winn actually arranged in 1767 for Adam and Chippendale to collaborate for the

VASES AND TRIPOD FROM "VASI CANDELABRI, ETC."

purpose of furnishing and decorating that mansion.

As more light is thrown by research on the origin of the designs of English furniture, it becomes increasingly certain that, on the question even of furniture-design the inevitable attack, which sooner or later assails every form of extended dominion in mundane affairs, is not now far off. When the onslaught is made it will be found necessary, in order to defend the citadel of Chippendale and Adam, to surrender many of their claims and to withdraw within such accurately marked frontiers as can be effectually maintained. Much of the outlying ground now occupied by Chippendale and Adam is Piranesi's property—how he acquired some of it, and how he was evicted without protest, will baffle the most subtle analyst. The materials from which his title-deeds are derived resemble the *Corinthium Æs* which was composed at the burning of Corinth, of an amalgamation of all the

other metals. The elements of Piranesi's materials are to be found, however, scattered over most of his etchings.

Piranesi's first publication of etchings, though undated, appeared in 1741, thirteen years before Adam's arrival in Italy. Bouchard of Rome had published, in 1750, the *Opere Varie* and *Carceri*, followed in the next year by the series of Piranesi's works in a great folio entitled *Le Magnificenze di Roma le più remarcabili.* The four volumes of *Antichità Romane* appeared in 1756, and it is here necessary to correct a statement made by some authorities that these four volumes embodied all the etchings of the kind that had thus far been produced by Piranesi's needle, and that they included the dated series of 1748 dedicated to Bottari. A careful search has been made and no justification can be found for this statement. None of the 47 views which Piranesi etched for the collection of 93 plates published in 1751 by Bouchard and called the

Raccolta di Varie Vedute appear in the *Antichità*, nor do any of the Bottari series, although in the latter case it would be not improbable that a copy could be found with the *Antichità* and Bottari series bound together as though they really belonged to one series of etchings.

Remembering that the brothers Adam designed for Chippendale, and proceeding along Clouston's line of thought, it becomes evident that Chippendale too has to thank Piranesi for a little of his fame, and a day may come yet when we perhaps shall be expected to speak of a piece of "Piranesi" where we now speak of a piece of "Chippendale" furniture.

The circumstances of the publication of the *Antichità Romane* are interesting in view of the light they throw on Piranesi's character. The four volumes *Antichità Romane* vary considerably as to title-page in different copies. The original intention of the etcher was to dedicate the work to James Caulfield,

1st Earl of Charlemont, who was staying in Rome in 1751 on his way home from Greece and Egypt.

Charlemont was the Irish statesman and friend of Grattan, and it was under his auspices and as Member for Charlemont that Grattan entered Parliament. He had been the benefactor of several young artists in Rome, among whom was Parker and possibly Chambers. Lord Charlemont had interested himself in the Fine Arts and was a friend of Reynolds and Johnson. He founded a school for English artists at Rome, which was ultimately closed after a brief career, owing to the misconduct of some of its students. As a member of the Dilettanti Society he had been Chairman of a Committee which that Society had appointed to superintend researches into the Classical Antiquities of Asia Minor.

The Dilettanti Society had been founded in 1733 by "some gentlemen who had travelled in Italy and who were desirous

of encouraging at home a taste for those objects which had contributed so much to their entertainment abroad." Pope's friend, Joseph Spence, a Fellow of New College and the author of *Polymetis*, was one of the few commoners who were its earliest members. The society published a series of splendid works on archæological subjects. James Stuart ("Athenian" Stuart) and Nicholas Revett produced for the Society *The Antiquities of Athens Measured and Delineated*, the work which led to the idea of St. James's Square, London, being built according to Greek architecture, and one of their friends and supporters, Robert Wood, a traveller and an Under Secretary of State, published *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer with a Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade*. The works of these three men caused Goethe to say that "with the exception of England, not one of the European nations of the present day possessed

the enthusiasm for the remains of classical antiquity which spares neither cost nor pains in the endeavour to restore them to their perfect splendour."

This leaning towards all things Classic which pushed aside English architecture in the middle of the reign of King George III. was perhaps originated by Stuart and Revett, and the house in St. James's Square, London, built by Stuart, was possibly the first actual result of the efforts to promote a Classic revival. Dealing with the door knockers designed by Kent early in the eighteenth century and still to be seen on the wooden gates at each end of the frontage of Devonshire House in Piccadilly, *The Art Journal* (p. 216, July 1911) says, "they are as typical of the work of the Palladian school, which Kent represented, as the door knockers in St. James's Square, designed by Robert Adam, are of the Piranesi school which dominated the taste in decoration during the third quarter of the same century."

Parker was the Director of Lord Charlemont's Academy of English Professors of the Liberal Arts at Rome, as it was called, and he acted as agent to Lord Charlemont. His career at the Academy was unfortunate ; his conduct there created such dissensions that he was ultimately one of the causes of the Academy being suppressed.

Piranesi and Parker quarrelled. Piranesi resented the treatment he was receiving at the hands of Parker, acting as Lord Charlemont's representative, and although during a period of years the etcher had been shaping his plans with the object of dedicating his work to Lord Charlemont, the result of his quarrel with Parker was, that Piranesi altered the title-page, striking out Lord Charlemont's name, and where other plates bore Lord Charlemont's name Adam's name was substituted. He issued in 1757, but only to his own friends, *Lettere di Giustificazione scritte a Milord Charlemont*, with eight engravings, explain-

ing the reason for his change of plan. Etched in quarto were the exact copies of the four original frontispieces which were to have immortalised Lord Charlemont as Piranesi's patron, with views of the inscriptions re-etched as they now stand. The effect of this manipulation is to make it appear as if the first inscriptions had been cut out of the stones depicted, and new ones inserted on small pieces. There are also head and tail pieces alluding to the matters and persons involved in the dispute. These Letters were afterwards suppressed, as they gave offence to persons other than those against whom they were directed.

The story as told by Piranesi in these Letters is, that wishing to dedicate to Lord Charlemont a collection of etchings on the sepulchral monuments of Rome, he left with Parker, for Lord Charlemont's inspection, certain of the plates. Parker returned them to him, some months after Lord Charlemont's departure from Rome, with a Latin inscrip-

PONTE MO

Veduta del Ponte Molle sul Tevere due miglia lontan da Roma
A Ristauri del Pontefice Nicolo V° B Rovine del Ponte supplite con
due ponti levatoi C Torre fabbricata ne' tempi bassi per custodia del Ponte

VER THE TIBER.

tion in honour of Lord Charlemont, to be engraved on the title-page. Piranesi worked at his plates till 1755, and in that year wrote to Lord Charlemont to tell him that the results of his labours would fill four volumes instead of one volume as had been originally intended, whereupon Lord Charlemont sent the etcher, through Parker, a corrected dedication more applicable to the enlarged scope of the work. When the work appeared some time later, Parker, in his capacity of Agent for Lord Charlemont, offered to purchase etchings to the value of 100 scudi (£20) and to give the etcher 100 scudi more as a present. These sums Piranesi refused as being an inadequate return for the four title-pages he had specially etched. In the discussion it appears that it was his habit to have a number of impressions taken from each plate, and that the fair remuneration for the work of etching each title-page was 300 scudi (£60), further that he usually received 1000 scudi (£200) for a total of

4000 impressions of various plates sold at $2\frac{1}{2}$ paoli each ; from which it may be gathered that the printer and publisher received $1\frac{1}{4}$ paoli (1s.) to cover cost of printing, paper, expenses of sale and profit for each impression, leaving 1s. for Piranesi for each impression sold.

Parker maintained that Piranesi had only received Lord Charlemont's permission for a dedication of one volume and that he had not authorised the dedication of four volumes. Piranesi retorted that Lord Charlemont, through Parker, had given consent by changing the inscription from "monumenta sepulchralia" for the one volume into "monumenta insignioria antiqua" for the four volumes. A friend of Parker, called by Piranesi "Sig. A. G.," desirous of arriving at a compromise, went to see Piranesi. He rendered the position very entertaining to the etcher by showing him a letter, purporting to come from Lord Charlemont, with a proposal that 50 zecchini should

be paid for the *Antichità*. If that sum did not satisfy Piranesi, "Sig. A. G." mildly notified the etcher that Lord Charlemont would close an unpleasing squabble by having him assassinated. Piranesi generously declined to believe Lord Charlemont was privy to the offer or threat, and himself closed the discussion by erasing the inscriptions from the four title-pages. He was deeply wounded by the disappointment he had experienced at the hands of Lord Charlemont, but he would not accept monetary offers made by another patron for the honour of having his name placed on the title-page, and Piranesi thenceforward regarded the public and posterity as the patrons of his labours. The frontispiece of the first volume of the *Antichità* is a splendid example of architectural composition: in the foreground, among a mass of shattered trophies, is a slab bearing the words, "Urbis Æternæ Vestigia Ruderibus Tem-

porumque Injuriis Vindicata Æneis Tabulis Incisa J. B. Piranesius Venetus Roma Degeus Ævo Suo Posteris Et Utilitate Publica. C.V.D." And just as in earlier times it was for certain reasons customary to efface from a monument the name of an Emperor by knocking away the bronze letters of the inscription bearing his name, leaving the useless nails still projecting, so Piranesi has made it abundantly clear that he has in a similar manner mutilated the original dedicatory inscription, and has etched the plate to appear as if a fresh block of stone had been let in to carry the altered inscription. Lying among the shields that form a trophy is one of unusual shape, on which an almost expunged coat of arms can be traced. The crest is Charlemont's.

On the whole, if the reasons set forth by Piranesi in these letters were the actual cause of the rupture, his complaint is deserving of sympathy. Piranesi was

a very poor man, and it is difficult to suppose that Lord Charlemont himself would have acted towards Piranesi in the manner adopted by his agent, Parker. At the outset Lord Charlemont may have wished to assist Piranesi, and his enthusiasm may have cooled ; it may be assumed, however, that he would not have dreamed of wounding the etcher's self-respect. But Parker, acting for him in his absence, played true to the reputation he had acquired as Director of the Academy of English Professors. He so infuriated Piranesi by the treatment received at his hands, that Piranesi in his letters not only reproached Lord Charlemont most bitterly, but in one or two passages permitted himself to adopt a tone scarcely short of impudent.

Possibly Lord Charlemont had originally, on the impulse of a moment, made promises to Piranesi which he later, on cooling down, decided to interpret in a manner rather less liberal than that which he had

led Piranesi to expect. Parker could scarcely have acted entirely without the instructions of his employer. Parker had probably been desired to waive aside Piranesi's requests gently and diplomatically, and so gradually bring home to Piranesi that no great hopes for real assistance should be based on Lord Charlemont's promised patronage. Money was the crux. Parker used a bludgeon, and, with a man of Piranesi's fiery character, the result was a violent explosion.

Charlemont, as may be gathered from the epitaph composed by himself and found among his papers, liked to pose as a benefactor. His habit of courting popularity extended beyond his acts as a politician and statesman. Traveller and antiquarian, he affected Art and Literature, and now, till the question of expense arose, would like to be patron of the etcher. His relations with Piranesi add no lustre to his character; it looks as

if he desired to receive the distinction of a dedication at the hands of an artist whom he had promised to encourage, but that on discovering that the honour involved duties and expense he either broke a promise or shuffled unworthily.

What one of his friends thought of Lord Charlemont may be judged by the following :—Boswell, in 1778, in expressing the opinion that travel improves conversation, puts forward Lord Charlemont as an instance in point. Whereupon Johnson makes short work of Lord Charlemont :—"I never but once heard him talk of what he had seen, and that was of a large serpent on one of the Pyramids of Egypt."

But Johnson's estimate of Lord Charlemont may have been not altogether unbiased. Charlemont had once tried to tease Johnson by asking him in the presence of Burke and Reynolds whether a newspaper report, that he was taking dancing lessons from Vestris, was true. Johnson

not only resented joking comments on his personal appearance or reflections on his dignity, but was exceedingly sensitive on the subject of looks generally; he disliked the historian Gibbon, who was a vain man notwithstanding a ridiculous nose and a button mouth, because he was "such an amazingly ugly person."

Hardy says that Lord Charlemont and Piranesi eventually became reconciled.

During the time that Piranesi was at work on the *Antichità Romane*, it may be remembered that Chambers was also at Rome lodging with Clérisseau, under whom he studied at Paris, and with whom he had come to England in 1755, and that Clérisseau, the friend of Robert Adam, worked also with Zucchi, who was employed on the illustrations of Adam's book.

Chambers, the pupil of Clérisseau, was eventually Sir William Chambers, R.A., who, besides being the architect of Somerset House and the architect

employed by Lord Charlemont to build Charlemont House, Dublin, was a designer of furniture and of decoration generally. Piranesi and Chambers were personally well known to one another in Rome, moving as they did in the same circle from 1747 to 1755. Chambers himself narrates that he knew Piranesi, and that he was present when a discussion took place between Piranesi and some pensioners of the French Academy, on the subject of the etcher's skill as an architect. The impression made by Piranesi and his etchings on Chambers may be seen in all Chambers's work.

Piranesi, from a comparatively early period in life, moved in what were artistically, and perhaps intellectually, the most desirable circles in Rome. He was regarded as one of the sights of the city, and was brought into contact with many of the accomplished visitors who flocked to Rome from all parts. His work was probably known to every lover of the Fine Arts who came to Italy.

The English and the Scotch were his principal admirers and patrons. Rome was particularly attractive to them in his time; the Pretender was living there, and was being continually visited by Scottish gentlemen who had gone out in the '45. Among the latter was Strange, the engraver, who had fled for his life and who lived to be knighted. It was Græme, a general in the service of Venice, who enabled his fellow-countryman Robert Adam to obtain, from the Governor of Dalmatia, permission to work at Spalato, for the purpose of making the drawings of the Palace of Diocletian. Several of his own countrymen recognised Piranesi's merits, and supported his claims for encouragement. Beyond that they did not go. Certainly no opportunity was ever given to Piranesi, even by them, of putting into practice any of the ideas with which his brain was crowded. He was employed to help architects and designers, his etchings were greatly

admired, but he was never commissioned to design and superintend the erection of a building by which he might possibly have been known for all time. Although he did not pose as a practical architect, in collaboration with a person versed in the science of building, his taste, originality, and power to manipulate space would probably have enabled him to clothe correct construction with great beauty.

The encouragement he received from English and Scottish friends may be seen in the various plates of the two volumes *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi*; they teem with dedications to British names. It may be interesting to quote a few :—George Grenville, William Beckford, Aubrey Beauclerk, Henry Hope, Penn Assheton Curzon, Conte di Lincoln (afterwards 2nd Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne), Lord Carmarthen, Lord Palmerston, Chas. Townley, T. M. Slade, Milord Conte D'Exeter a Burghley, Gavin Hamilton, and Thomas Jenkins. These two last named are referred to later on.

The unexpected name of Charles Morris appears on some of the etchings: how it comes there it is difficult to understand. Morris was a "Steak," the punchmaker and bard of the "Beafsteak" Society. Morris with classic urns is hard to realise,—he seems out of place as a patron of Art. Macaulay says he was a buffoon, and mentions Morris and Wolcot (Peter Pindar) as having made Pitt the victim of "a merriment which was of no very delicate kind."

Although Piranesi called himself a son of Rome, and boasted that the fascination of Rome had alone inspired him to work, he never forgot his native city, and the words "Architetto Veneziano" reappear on his title-pages from time to time. He complained of the inertness of the eighteenth-century Italians in appreciation of the Beautiful, and praising the English nation for the protection she grants to all the Arts, declared that, had it been in his power to choose his birth-place, he would have preferred London.

Will he be justified eventually? For although the British Empire is now more populous and richer than ever was the Roman Empire, will the etcher of architecture from New Zealand, as he picks his steps through the prophesied tangle of dock-leaves and nettles seventeen centuries hence, find, among the ruins of our London, architectural remains capable of inspiring and fascinating the Piranesi of 3450 A.D. as the remains of Rome fascinated the Piranesi of 1750? The nineteenth century has been a period of increasing wealth and of prosperity scarcely ruffled even by wars on distant frontiers, yet what has a century of such peace and richness contributed to national architecture in Great Britain? To the English cathedrals built in the days of our Norman and Angevin kings, to the Tudor and Jacobean glories of the two Universities, to St. Paul's Cathedral and the English country houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we have merely

added Barry's Palace of Westminster, with its sight-value undeveloped owing to its design being not only crippled but also dull and devoid of the candour proper to the Gothic ; a Cathedral hard by, the Law Courts, the Government Offices between Charing Cross and Westminster, and—the Albert Memorial. Liverpool will be able to add her Cathedral and her St. George's Hall, the latter being perhaps as fine an example of the Classic style of architecture produced in modern times as there is to be found anywhere in Europe. And this is notwithstanding our protestations and affectations of what it has pleased some of us to talk of as our "culture and admiration of the Fine Arts." Do we realise that we have failed to learn how to build Imperially ?[1]

[1] In London three recent examples will prove the failure: the archway at the end of the Mall, the Wesleyan buildings at Westminster, and the façade at the South Kensington Museum. In each of these buildings the pompous vulgarity of general effect is well matched by the undignified meanness of the details.

The fiery and impetuous character of Piranesi's temperament is seen by the way in which he set himself to commit to an etched plate every item of archæological interest that met his eye. With the imagination of genius, he grasped the intentions of the original designer of an ancient or mediæval ruin, supplied what had been lost, and reproduced the finished whole. Still, crude genius was not the quality which enabled Piranesi to achieve what he did. The success of his needle was not the result of any flash of genius such as at times makes the painter or the sculptor. His position was reached by honest, persistent, laborious toil, and a love of his work. He tasted the serene beauties of Art and Architecture, and he was conscious of the slightest shading in their flavour. Noble form inspired him as does melody the musician, and with his needle he played the theme and improvised its variations. To him architecture was just

what Goethe called it, petrified music, "Baukunst, eine erstarrte Musik."

Piranesi's energy was inexhaustible. He is responsible for more than 1300 plates: he lived but fifty-eight years, and, assuming 1739 as the approximate date of his earliest work on the first set of plates, an output of roughly a plate a fortnight, without intermission, throughout the entire remainder of his life from his nineteenth year, is evidence that he was as industrious as he was skilful. But it must not be forgotten that these 1300 or more plates were by no means his only work. There was work of a kindred type, and in particular the restorations he carried out for Pope Clement XIII. There is, however, one thing certain about the position to-day of Piranesi's reputation in the eyes of students of architectural etching, and that is, that the industry which enabled so great a quantity of work to be produced did not mar the quality of that work or subject it to the liability of adverse criticism,

which is often the result of a large output. The reputation of many a painter that has been built up by pictures hung separately may be diminished by the sight of a collection of the one man's work seen as a whole. For instance, when an Exhibition is held at Burlington House of the collected works of an artist, recently deceased, if the collection is very representative, nothing is more likely to happen than that one comes away with the opinion that one has seen nothing fresh to add to the reputation of the painter, but has had a closer and increased knowledge of his shortcomings.

Put Piranesi to a similar test, go through his hundreds of plates, some of which are undoubtedly dull, and it will be observed that each etching contributes something to the degree and kind of our appreciation. As to faults of execution, it is surprising how difficult it is to detect them. Examining the work of men who etched before his time, and the

work of men who, after his death, tried to imitate him, it will be thought that no work can be put forward which possesses quality sufficiently good to entitle it to be classed as a competitor with that of Piranesi. Other etchers have succeeded him, but none have yet replaced him.

Nearly a thousand plates were published during his lifetime, and besides the question of monetary return the frequency with which fresh plates appeared injured his reputation. Had only a few subjects been etched and a limited number of impressions taken from the plates, the etchings would have been eagerly sought after, and the price obtainable correspondingly higher.

The glut was accentuated after his death, for his sons Francesco and Pietro republished the etchings. By that time, however, the plates had become worn and the impressions had lost their charm and their original crispness. Unfortunately, the mischief did not stop there ; the plates were republished

by Firmin Didot in 1835 at Paris, by which time all the sharpness which was the "quiddity" of the beauty of the etchings had disappeared for ever.

The worn-out plates still exist, or they did exist till lately, and recent impressions from them are obtainable. They are, if still existing, in the possession of the Regia Calcografia at Rome, and of the etched works published by Piranesi's sons impressions of 1180 plates can still be purchased by those who desire etchings from which all artistic value has long since disappeared.

To those who wish to see Giovanni Piranesi the etcher at his best, it is useless to examine impressions other than those published in Rome on paper which is easily recognisable by its texture and thickness, and which was made on purpose for the etchings. Impressions later than the original Roman publications had better be left alone, as they are not only disappointing as works of art, but they entirely mislead the student

who wishes to understand how Piranesi handled his work.

It is also beside the mark to discuss here the various states of the plates from the collector's point of view—that is to say, to discuss or describe a plate in the inscription of which a "t" may occur sometimes crossed and sometimes uncrossed, or minute variations of that kind.

There were plenty of variations in the plates. But, so long as the impressions taken from them are of the original Roman issue, they are all interesting for reasons much more important than those esoteric ones by which they would be distinguished in the print collector's microscopic eyes.

As to the edition published in Paris, in comparison with the original Roman impressions it is unworthy of being regarded seriously as representing Piranesi's work, and as for the modern Roman impressions, taken from the worn or retouched or refaced plates, they perpetrate violence on his good name.

With so many plates from which to choose, one is embarrassed by the difficulty of selection, and one neither knows where to begin nor when to stop. Addison's idea of Cowley's wit might perhaps apply to Piranesi's plates :—

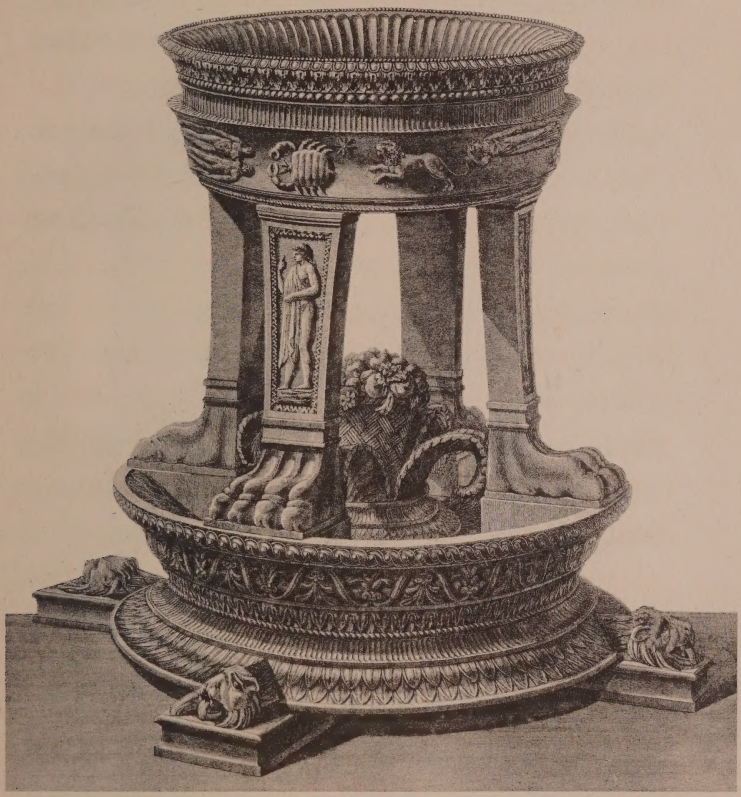
"One glitt'ring thought no sooner strikes our eyes
With silent wonder, but new wonders rise:
As in the milky way a shining white
O'erflows the heav'ns with one continued light;
That not a single star can shew his rays,
Whilst jointly all promote the common blaze."
Account of English Poets, to Mr. H. S.

The etchings are seen to their best advantage as wall decorations, but they are large, and take up the space usually required by a fair-sized oil-painting ; therefore, unless the wall space be very extensive, half a dozen Piranesi etchings are about as many as one room will accommodate.

Then, again, almost all the original impressions are equally beautiful as etched work, and they all maintain a high level of interest from the point of view of subject.

On the other hand, an etching or two will no more show the irresistible force of this man than will the bazaar-born glass paper-weight with a photograph of Niagara reconstitute the appalling spectacle of the Falls at flood-time. So it is hard to decide which plates to prefer. Piranesi's work shows that his taste was of the most catholic kind—every style, every period, every object attracted him. He sipped from every flower upon which his eye rested, he transformed his harvest into a honey as useful as it was seductive. He handled his subject, too, on a liberal scale, he must express himself largely or not at all; he found equal pleasure in etching the Antique, examples of the Renaissance period, ruins in the last stage of dilapidation, Classic monuments, bridges, churches, statues, vases, sarcophagi, urns, candelabra, mantelpieces, details of the water levels of lakes, ground plans, elevations, sections of mouldings, columns in fragments, and enrichments. In

Altra veduta in prospettiva dello stesso Tripode.



Al Signor Guglielmo Maodowall Cavaliere Inglese
amatore delle belle arti
In atto d'ossequio il Cavaliere Gio Batta Piranesi DDD

FROM "VASI CANDELABRI, ETC."

fact, every kind of work that was fine in conception or likely to be interesting or instructive to the student of archæology or architecture, formed his *farrago libelli.*

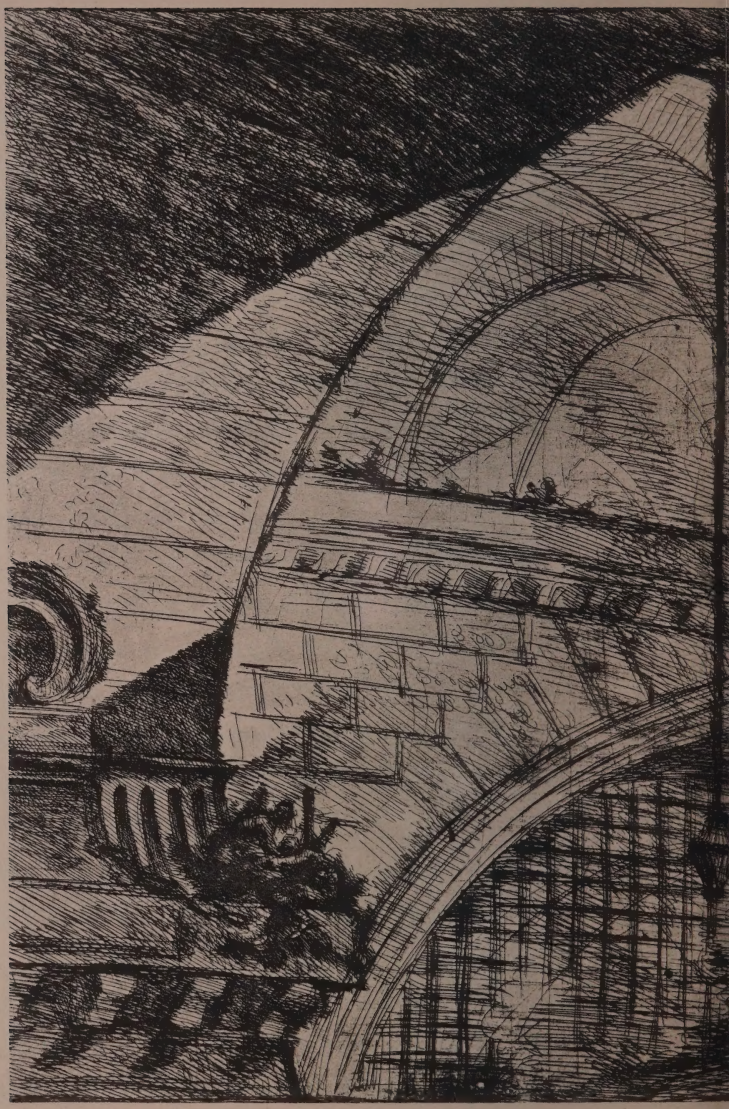
The most interesting designs used by the ancients for mouldings and carved decoration can be extracted from the etchings, and they are therefore a mine of wealth to the craftsman in stone or wood. Piranesi placed in black and white, and at the disposal of the practical architect, a storehouse of knowledge, which before his time had been difficult of access, and the manner in which the Renaissance style of architecture unfolded and developed itself can be followed by means of these etchings.

As for collecting the entire set of the etchings, the difficulty would present itself of knowing how to deal with and arrange the many variations occurring in quantities of the plates. For example, the two folios *Vedute di Roma*, published in Rome in 1770, were originally composed of about 60 plates,

and the number grew to 137, each plate having been issued separately and with intervals between each publication. But these two volumes of the *Vedute di Roma* have, in one instance, been found to be made up of 187 plates, most of the additional plates being duplicates with variations of all kinds, published during Piranesi's lifetime, and after he had completed and published the two folios of 1770.

Some of the peculiarities of his workmanship which particularly attract the craftsman are the burin work and the general beauty produced by the etching needle, and no man is able to realise how much etching can accomplish until Piranesi's execution has been examined.

He has been described by some as "the Rembrandt of Architecture," owing to the force and vigour he lent his work and to his skill in assembling subjects from different locations and blending them into a composition. Then there is his imagination



INTERIOR OF A PRISON, FROM "

CERI D'INVENZIONE," FIRST STATE.

and love of the gigantic, which Walpole said "would startle Geometry and exhaust the Indies to realise."

De Quincey relates that he was, with Coleridge, "looking over Piranesi's *Antiquities of Rome*." Coleridge standing by, described to him a set of plates which Coleridge called "Piranesi's Dreams." These plates are no doubt *Le Carceri d'Invenzione*,[1] a set of amazing designs fashioned in Piranesi's mind during a delirium of fever.

Coleridge, presumably, did not remember the designs of Daniel Marot, who was, with Lepautre and Bérain, one of the most comprehensive exponents of that style which is known as French Baroc. The plates of Marot, whose death took place at about the date of Piranesi's birth, were always familiar to those interested in architecture, design-

[1] The student should compare these plates with some of the etchings of Charles Méryon (1821–68).

ing, engraving and garden planning, and his name, as well as that of his father, was famous at the Courts of the King of France and of the Prince of Orange. Marot having settled in Holland after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, became Architect to William III. of England, and that mixture of the Classic with Baroc, the style of decoration identified in England with the reign of William and Mary, is derived from Marot's and, to some extent, from Verrio's (see p. 54) handling of design. Both did considerable work at Hampton Court, and Tijou's wrought iron screens there were inspired, if not actually designed, by Marot. Some of the stuff of which Piranesi's dreams were made was obtainable from Marot. Marot published in 1708 a small series of plates of ideas for decoration. One of the plates is entitled "Prison d'Amadis," and it should be placed by the student alongside the *Carceri d'Invenzione*. It is the only

plate of Marot's which has any bearing on this particular point, but if Piranesi had previously seen the plate, as most likely he had, judging by a comparison of other of Piranesi's original designs with those of Marot, the general scheme of the "Prison d'Amadis" plate had infiltrated into Piranesi's mind and had coloured his dreams.[1] Then recalling to himself, in some chaotic shape, the Baths of Caracalla and the Palace of the Cæsars, where, among their ruins, he had stood on majestic terraces of steps to watch the lower ones sink and disappear into damp uncanny pits, and had gazed upon galleries flying from fractured arch to fractured arch, he imagined scenes of Titanic masonry, wherein he piled palaces on bridges, and strove to climb to heaven

[1] The theatrical scene-paintings of Ferdinando Galli (known as Ferdinando Da Bibiena, 1657–1743) and Andrea Pozzo's book on perspective (1693) may also have influenced him.

through poised chaos by a ladder of architectural fairy tales. Then, "after his fancy had run riot," says Walpole, "through the whole gamut of torture and perpetual imprisonment, he ends up with three impossible and incoherent scenes wherein Death lies grinning at the architectural result." Piranesi had turned his dreams, in which no doubt his controversies too found some place, into etched plates, and consciously or unconsciously they became his designs for prisons, as the instrument of retributive justice. They resembled what he felt he had seen in a nightmare of maniacs, of dungeons, of prisons, of torture chambers, of endless staircases in league-high bedlams, where the culprit groped along galleries leading to edifices which were always a staircase farther on beyond the gallery he had just crossed. Thus is seen the doomed figure repeated again and again as the eye moves forward over the etchings, and the

spirit of the idea is symbolical of the man's disposition.

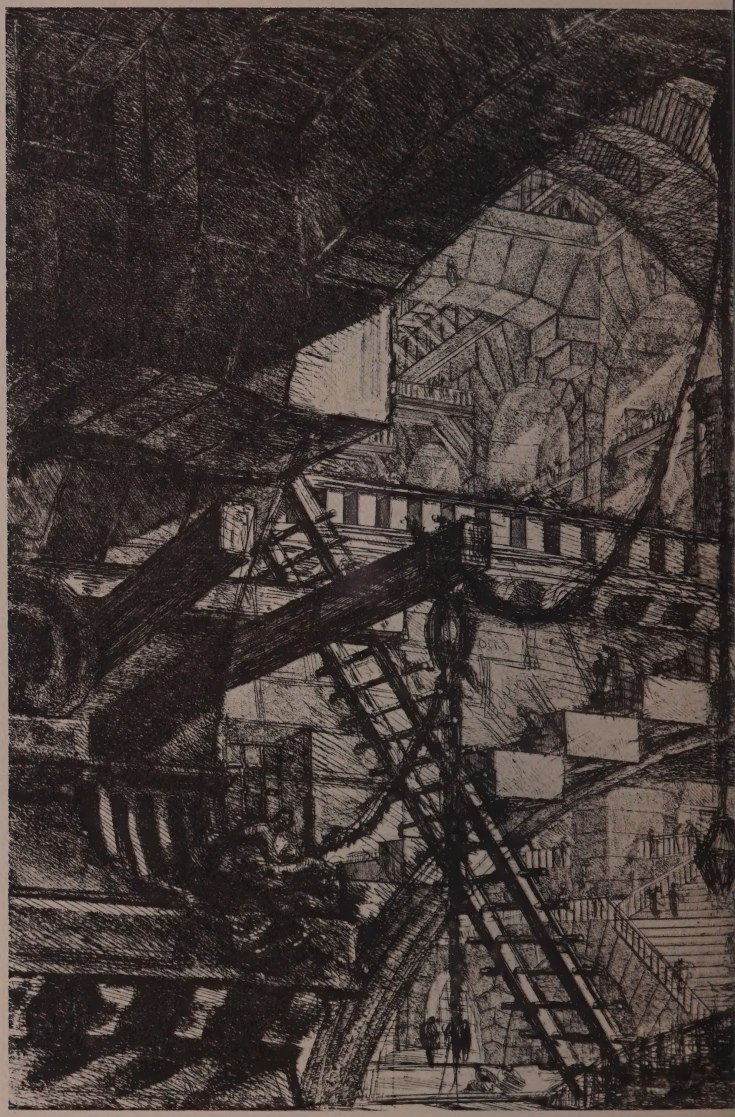
Piranesi, full of the nightmare, slashed away with his needle, heedless of ocular digestion, architectural coherence, or structural correctness. Fancy guided the fingers to express in etched black and white his idea of a boundless penitentiary, stretching to beyond the crack of doom. The hopelessness of these interminable ladders of stairs with the figure advancing, without, however, appearing to make progress, seems to paralyse the vitality of the onlooker. In Rome this whirling rhodomontade of Dantesque imagination appealed, in a singularly strong manner, to the temperament of a race always tinged with megalomania. Indeed, to this trait of the national character may be attributed the existence of the stupendous examples of architecture throughout Italy in ancient, mediæval, and even in modern times.

These designs created the utmost interest

on their publication and, regarded as sane work by a madman possessing the highest originality of thought, they greatly enhanced the reputation of Piranesi. Students still prefer them to all his other plates. As far as actual craftsmanship is concerned this series of *Carceri* is perhaps his best work technically; the etching is more than usually pure, and less artificial treatment and fewer technical short-cuts are employed than in many of his other plates, the result being that vigour and exhaustive treatment are at once apparent.

There are two distinct states of the *Carceri* plates. In the first state the 14 etchings are fainter and not quite as interesting as they are in the second state. The first state contains much less detail, and in the second state there are two additional plates, making 16 in all.

All manner of further architectural schemes were worked into the fourteen *Carceri* plates by Piranesi after the first impressions had been taken. These schemes, which



FROM "CARCERI D'INVENZIONE." S

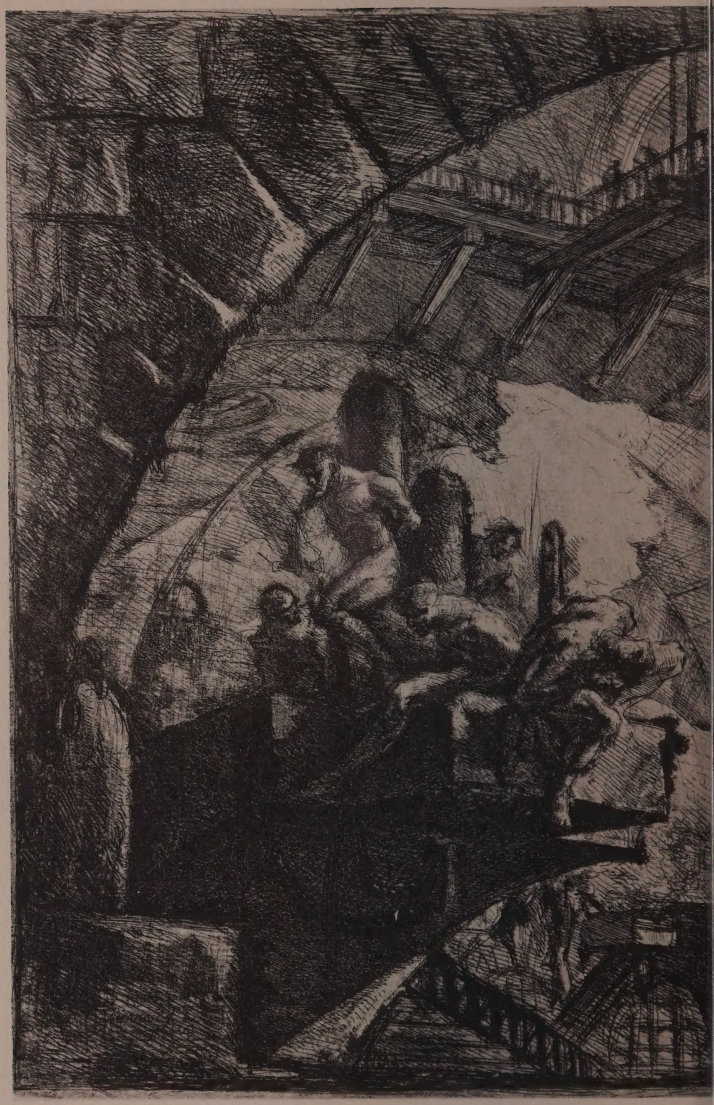
ID STATE OF THE PREVIOUS PLATE.

involve changes that are in some cases very drastic, will enable the student to see the dexterity of the etcher in manipulating his tools and in developing his design, and will at the same time demonstrate how the effect of immensity of space, which it was the etcher's particular aim to convey to the eye, was attained. At present only five complete sets of the first state appear to be known : one in the Soane Museum, one in the British Museum, formerly in the hands of Mr. Herbert Batsford, who first detected the differences in the states, one at Dresden [Kupferstichcabinet], one at Munich, and one at Rome in the Accademia di S. Luca. There is a mutilated copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

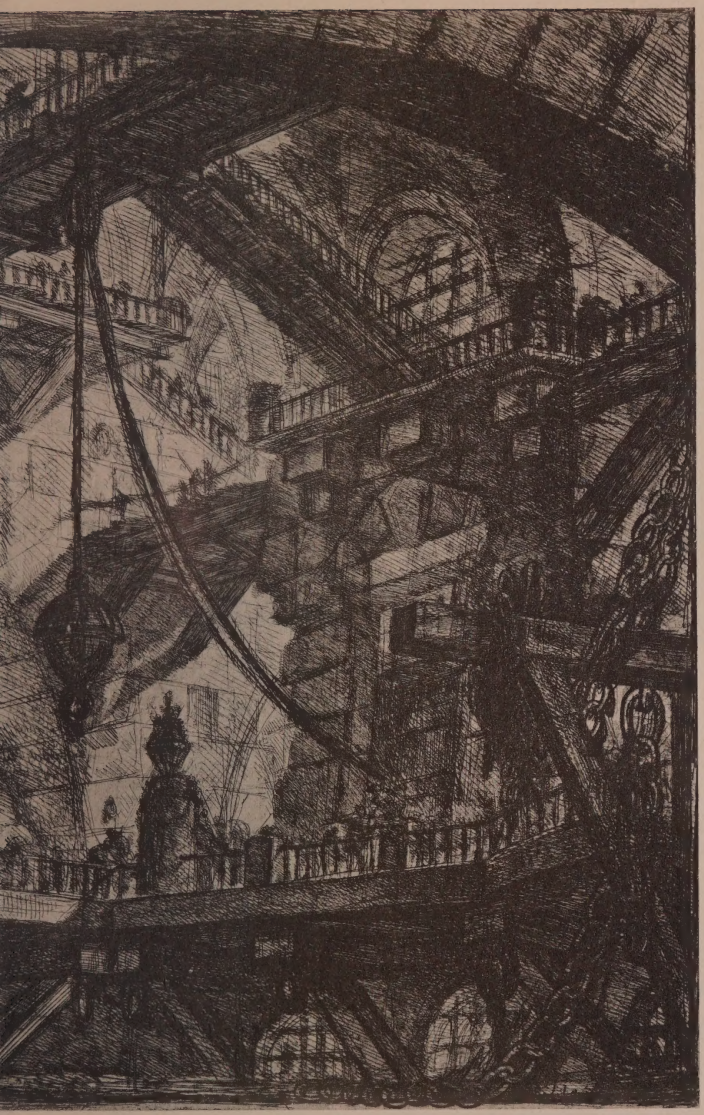
The *Carceri* plates have also appealed very strongly to Professor Reginald Blomfield, and he has given his views on them in connection with the English architect George Dance. The execution and finish

of these plates should not be compared with the careful drawing and the skilful treatment by which Piranesi's other etchings of architecture and landscape are marked. They have their own special qualities, of their kind consummate ; they are the very essence of whatever meaning the word "Piranesi" conveys.

Among the debts due by English architects to Piranesi is that owed by George Dance. Professor Blomfield tells us that George Dance, the architect of Old Newgate Prison, in early manhood visited Rome (1758), where he fell under the influence of Piranesi, whose fame, gained by the admiration excited by his designs of prisons, published by Bouchard of Rome in 1751, was known to the entire artistic world. Dance and Piranesi were, moreover, both members of the Academy of the Arcadi. This was the beginning of the association between the architect of Newgate Prison and the designer of the weird



FROM "CARCI



D'INVENZIONE."

Carceri d'Invenzione, who, as a result of the custom of the Academy of the Arcadi to rename its members, appears himself as Salcindio Tiseio on a title-page of that series of his etchings of imaginary buildings which impressed Walpole. Dance was elected in 1764; Piranesi had at that date been a member for some years—certainly prior to 1750.

It is interesting to note that after being made a member of this Society Piranesi picked his usual quarrel with another member, an architect, at an early opportunity.

Dance was given the whole credit for the architectural masterpiece which Old Newgate Prison undoubtedly was. But, inspired by Piranesi, who had lately created the *Carceri d'Invenzione*, and who was, if one adopts Professor Blomfield's estimate, the greatest architectural draughtsman who ever lived, it was placed in the power of Dance to produce a result which it was impossible for Dance again

to match unaided, or in other directions. Professor Blomfield goes so far as to state the opinion that Newgate was, to all intents, more Piranesi than Dance.

Another British architect enlisted his help. The Pitt Bridge over the Thames, finished in 1769 and commonly known as Old Blackfriars Bridge, was etched by Piranesi. When the plans of this bridge were still in an undecided state, Robert Mylne, who had studied architecture at Rome, handed a portion of his design to Piranesi, who elaborated it, and also etched a view of the bridge for Mylne at Rome in 1766. Mylne proposed the use of elliptical and not circular arches ; this gave rise to a deal of discussion, and Dr. Johnson took part in the controversy in support of his friend Gwynn. It was at Mylne's suggestion that the inscription in honour of Wren was placed over the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Piranesi corresponded with Mylne over a number of years, but although he

maintained intimate relations with several English artists there are no evidences of his ever having been in England.

The temperament of Piranesi had the fullest effect upon his work. If his triumphs brought him elation, he was in turn afflicted with a despair that was almost infernal. It was during those moments of gloom that he saw nothing but the failure of his career and a lost reputation. Under such mental distress were imagined the *Carceri* designs, and those sketches of ruins wherein grotesque impossibility was blended with reality. For instance, he gives a plate of a Roman altar, half eaten away by age and covered with the damp moss of centuries—desolation, utter desolation, decay, disaster, all written in every line. But no real ruin was ever like this, it is purely the work of imagination, just as in Greek tragedy horror is piled upon horror, in order to shock the mind into a fitting condition of awe. The very shattered columns he drew, bound and

twisted around with creepers, writhe almost in human agony. The despair, dissolution, and solitude conveyed by this treatment perhaps taught Gustave Doré how to handle the horrors with which he illustrated *Le Juif Errant*; the same blending of sensation real and unreal may have enabled Edgar Allan Poe to arrive at a similar result in his stories.

To return to Piranesi's artistic characteristics, his chief strength lay in execution. At times his drawing was faulty and his perspective bad. He even violated the rules of proportion, and, in many ways, disregarded the rule of perspective whenever he found that course necessary for the better expression of his ideas. It is certain that he intentionally drew thus for the purpose of obtaining particular effects, but whether this is an excuse worth anything or not, it is evident, at a glance, that several of his towers are drawn incorrectly. With an ellipse he was hopelessly impotent, his horizon is often

taken too high, and sometimes his objects are crowded, but

> "Ubi plura nitent . . . non ego paucis
> Offendar maculis."

In addition to faulty draughtsmanship, Piranesi indulged a habit of deliberately amplifying in the plate the proportions of a building actually before him. The *Veduta dell' insigne Basilica Vaticana coll' amplio Portico e Piazza adjacente*, and in fact most of his etchings of S. Pietro in Vaticano, are relevant as evidence in support of this assertion. Indeed, he dreamed and drew Rome more splendid than she had been, even at the zenith of her magnificence. This extravagance brought him into a dispute with the Abbé Martin Choupy of Cap Martin, the investigator of Horace's Villa, who claimed that Piranesi had not been generally faithful to his subject. Piranesi thought it prudent to treat the matter as a joke, and to reply verbally, rather than to give Choupy the opportunity which a reply upon etched

plate or letter paper would have afforded. The facts were plainly as stated by the Abbé, and Piranesi had no defence.

The modifications and additions of this nature were not, however, made out of vulgar untruthfulness or dishonesty. With a poetic and imaginative vision, aided by an instinctive archæological perception and power to improvise, he was convinced that he could render more interesting the proportions of the scene before him, and as to him and to his patrons the centre of the world was Rome, there could, he thought, be no act of deception in his varying on paper the representation of buildings which must be as well known to the artistic world as was his own right hand to the etcher himself. Piranesi considered Rome was so unlike any other city, that what was strange and ill-suited to another city was natural and proper in her case. In some instances, indeed, where he felt that he could improve upon the proportions of a

scene or building, provided his inability to handle a perspective ellipse is not revealed, the effect he has obtained may be considered by some as almost sufficient to justify the tampering, so far as designing is concerned.

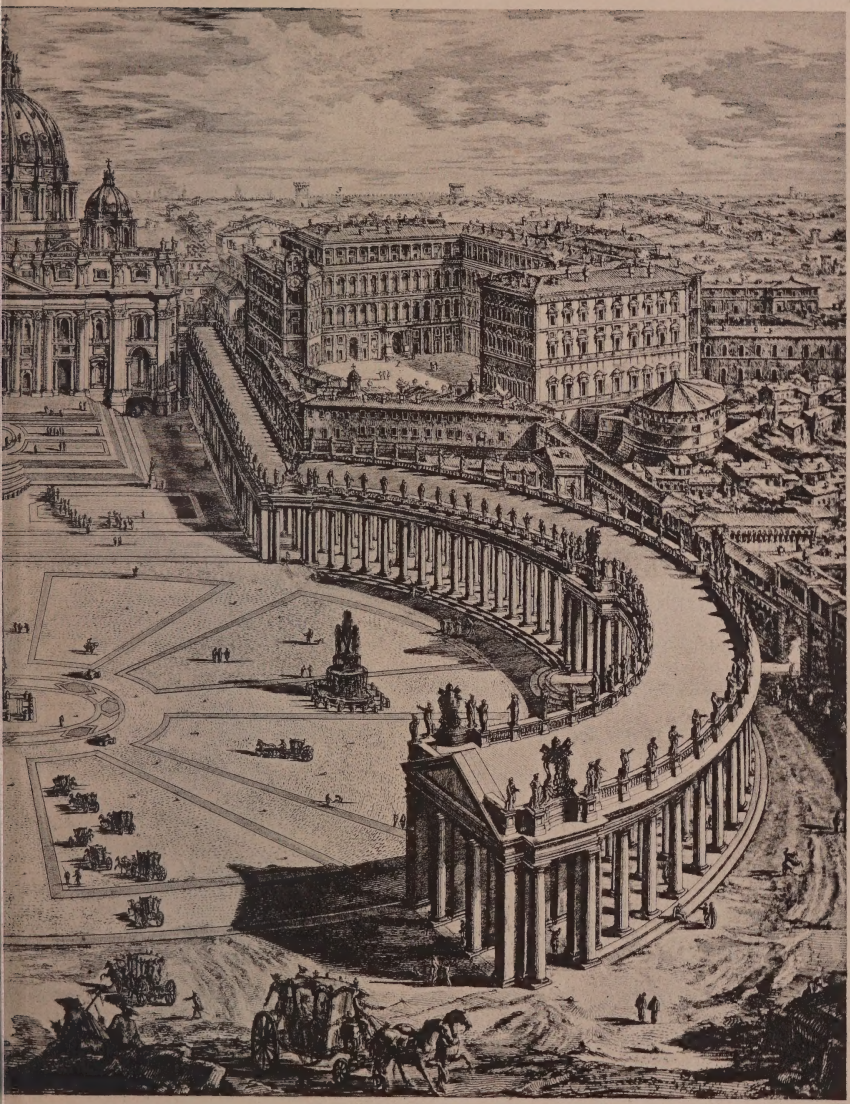
His view, apparently, was, that after all, there were modern architects equal to those of the past, and that infallibility did not of necessity always lie on the side of the ancients. It has been claimed that he was not so untruthful as might be imagined, one explanation put forward being that "he gave us the aspect of many a fine old building in its more perfect condition before the havoc wrought by one and more centuries of Popes and Princes and of ignorant peasants, and also before the cleaning up of the present archæological epoch." But that explanation certainly will not cover, for instance, Piranesi's extensions of Bernini's curved colonnades flanking the steps and Piazza of St. Peter's. These curved colonnades never extended to the distance shown

in Piranesi's plates during the etcher's lifetime, or at any other time.

He strove to realise in his etched work the brilliant atmosphere of Italy. The contrasts between his sunshine and shadow are effects which soon strike even a person entirely without knowledge of etching and its kindred arts. And there is probably no other etcher who has more nearly succeeded in conveying to the eye the impression of colour, by means only of black ink on white paper.

This was the result of his habit of working out of doors; he thus had constantly before his eyes the exact values of the shade and light, while the distinctions between the various colours were intensified by the brilliancy of the Italian atmosphere. When a portion of the subject on a plate is thrown into excessive shadow no detail is lost, every line is apparent, just as one can distinguish leaves notwithstanding the deep shadow of a forest. And this is no mean achievement, for the weatherbeaten and faded stone colours of

ST. PETE



AT ROME.

his subject usually lent but little assistance towards Piranesi's sharply defined contrasts of shadow and light. But at times the limit is overstepped and the balance ruined. Then, with the extreme contrasts of light and shade, the sight is often baffled, and there is nothing left but for the eye to grope for what is intended. The printing of the plate, or help from the printer, have nothing whatever to do with the intense depths of light and shadow. The entire effect is produced by the etching tools ; every value, every stroke has been laid on with the precisely desired pressure and swell, without hesitation, and with perfect craftsmanship : from that came the impression, pure and deeply bitten. It is conceivable that the etching tools included a brush with short and rather stiff bristles, that the etcher, having dipped this unusual tool in weak aqua-fortis, painted over the already etched plate and by that means increased the strength of a shadow, or tapered off the variation of a tone.

Figures of men and sometimes goats perched on fragments of stone are introduced into the etchings in order to show, perhaps to magnify, the proportions of a column, or other portion of a building, and the costumes of such figures are often of the period in which Piranesi lived. He was fond, too, of the figures of beggars in picturesque rags —old friends of his who had once on a time served him as models—and he caused them to appear gesticulating in a very lively fashion, certainly appropriate to their vocation, but also entirely characteristic of the energy and impetuosity of the etcher himself. The movement of arms and hands in the figures of the beggars may indeed faithfully represent the gestures of the Italian, always so delightfully expressive; but in the etchings the interest they create is intensified by the probability that possibly they may have unconsciously reflected Piranesi's own fiery personal mannerisms.

Reference has already been made to the influence of Piranesi upon Dance, the architect of Newgate. Now, while Dance was at work on the Newgate drawings, there was in his employ an errand-boy or apprentice named Soan, afterwards known as Sir John Soane (1753–1837), architect of the Bank of England. I should like to say here that a very high authority is quite incorrect in stating that Soane's name was originally Swan. Mr. Walter Spiers, Curator of the Sir John Soane's Museum, has been kind enough to show me ample proof that Soane's father's name was Soan, and that the son remained Soan till 1783-4 when, having grown prosperous, he added the fashionable "e."

The boy Soan's mind was impressed by the work which his master, Dance, was carrying out, and there is reason to suspect that the feeling and treatment of Soane's Bank of England building were due to this Dance-Piranesi-Soane manner. "The cask

remembers its first wine," as Horace has said.

> "Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
> Testa diu." (*Hor. Ep.*)

Soane having acquired an affectation of the Classic, grew into the habit of following Piranesi's ideas, and then attained the power of absorbing the marked peculiarities of the treatment and adapting them to his own purposes. Soane did not rely on Piranesi's etchings. He made elaborate drawings and measured plans of the Temple of Sibyl at Tivoli. The Sir John Soane's Museum contains a number of Soane's drawings of this nature, and, in addition, a quantity of drawings of ruins by Robert Adam, which recall Piranesi's type of work. They were probably drawn by Adam when he was in Italy and in close touch with Piranesi and Clérisseau.

In this Museum are the drawings which perhaps are as well known as any of Piranesi's works—those of the Temples and

Basilica at Pæstum,[1] by Piranesi and his son Francesco. They afford opportunity of seeing the method by which the father worked, and also of judging how good was Francesco's work.

The association between Soane and the Piranesi family endured longer than Piranesi's life. The Soane Museum gives proof that Soane continued it by a friendship with Piranesi's son Francesco ; in the Museum are records that Francesco Piranesi gave Sir John Soane the Pæstum series of drawings referred to above.

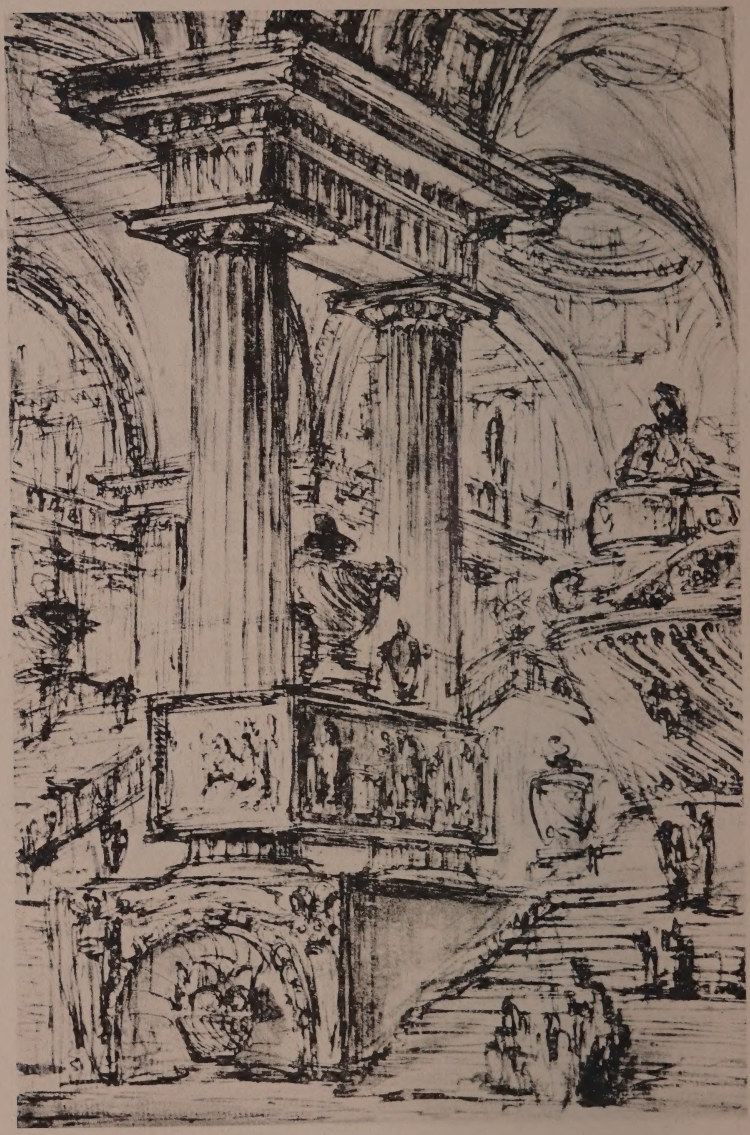
All this serves as evidence that Piranesi's influence on them and their work was of great importance, to architectural as well as to furniture designers, during the period 1750 to 1820.

Not content with influencing only architecture and furniture, Piranesi even rambled into bookplates, designing and

[1] That Temple called by the etcher the Temple of Juno is now known as the Temple of Ceres.

signing one for "Mr. Menzies." Mr. Menzies' bookplate is entirely such as might be expected from his hand, a pictorial landscape, characteristic and in his peculiar style. This is an exceedingly rare plate, it is known and recorded and has been reproduced; but an original example is not in the British Museum. No other English bookplate by Piranesi is known: that of the Earl of Aylesford, though like the work of Piranesi and usually attributed to him, is by the Earl of Aylesford, who was himself an accomplished draughtsman.

Piranesi threw off multitudes of interesting small sepia drawings, mostly of architectural designs, and similar to his published etchings in subject and treatment, but they have attracted no attention in comparison with the etchings. There is an instructive collection of sixteen drawings to be found in the Kunsthalle at Hamburg (see page 217). Two of these deal with subjects



FROM AN ORIGINAL DRAWING IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

which he did not usually handle : one represents a figure study for a carnival scene, and the other a harbour scene ; the remaining fourteen may be called architectural. There are also fifty-two in the British Museum,[1] and in some of these, as well as in the Hamburg examples and in the large Pæstum drawings at the Soane Museum, red chalk is employed to strengthen the effect. Among those in the British Museum is a curious drawing, probably with Pompeii as the scene, wherein an assassination is about to take place,—two men, carrying a corpse, are passing another intended victim, — a weird, imaginative, Piranesi piece of work, but perhaps by Francesco. With it is a much finer drawing of an idea for a Temple of Victory. These drawings all go to one of two extremes, they are either just "knocked in," or the details are executed with extraordinary minuteness.

[1] Forty-six of these were formerly in the possession of Dr. John Gott, Bishop of Truro. (See p. 215.)

There are four important drawings in the National Gallery of Scotland.

In furniture and in the decoration of the interior of houses the names of Adam and Wedgwood seem to connect themselves —Wedgwood's pottery being analogous to Adam's style of decoration in many respects. Wedgwood's plaques are often found in Adam furniture and decoration, and Sheraton employed Wedgwood continually. There is still to be seen a drawing from Sheraton's hand, showing Wedgwood plaques of Classic subjects, in a design for an existing satinwood piano-case made in 1796 for Don Manuel de Godoy, Prince of the Peace.

In much of the Classic pottery-work produced by Wedgwood there are characteristics easily traceable to Piranesi's etchings. Flaxman was employed by Wedgwood and Bentley about 1778, the year of Piranesi's death ; by that date, of course, Piranesi and his works had become well

known in England. Shortly after he had been engaged by Wedgwood, Flaxman visited Rome.

Now, if one examines work executed for Wedgwood by Flaxman, and then turns over the pages of Piranesi's folios, the evidence is strong, on the ground of similarity of treatment in the designs, that Flaxman's mind was influenced and helped by the records of Antique decoration which had been scarcely available to artists and designers until Piranesi had collected, etched, and placed them at the world's disposal. And in confirmation of this, it may be again mentioned that Piroli, the pupil and principal helper of Piranesi, was Flaxman's friend; moreover, Piroli did work for Flaxman under the latter's close personal direction (see page 32).

Then, again, there is further evidence of Piranesi's influence in Wedgwood pottery through Angelini. Angelini was that friend of Piranesi who executed the statue

of the etcher which stands near the spot where Piranesi lies buried; he modelled for Wedgwood and executed a considerable amount of work for the celebrated potter.

Wedgwood, with his purity of taste, was attracted by that quality in Piranesi, and recognising in the latter's work a powerful ally, availed himself of the help of the men who were saturated, not only with the personality of Piranesi, but with design as interpreted by him in his own peculiar manner. In forming opinions upon the decorative work connected with his craft, Wedgwood had made great use of Count de Caylus' "Recueil d'Antiquités, etc." This would render his mind susceptible to infection by Piranesi's Etruscan theory. One may then ask whether Piranesi's influence can be discerned in the fact that Wedgwood, in 1769, threw aside the old name of his new "Ridge House" Factory and called it "Etruria."

The etchings of the Pæstum temples

show how Piranesi could handle deep and black shadows. He has made the most of his capacity to deal with absolute black and intense white while etching shattered fragments of architecture strewn on the sites of the temples. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Pæstum temples were as ruinous as now—for 150 years not a stone has fallen. Time has little to do with the destruction of solid buildings — man is the chief cause—so long as no disaster such as an earthquake or a flood occurs meantime. The Pæstum temples suffered more at the hands of the inhabitants of the town of Pesto than from anything during the centuries which have passed over them since the inhabitants left that fever-stricken district. Poseidonia, Pæstum, Pesto, existed as a city for about 1500 years. Better known for its roses than for its importance as a city or port it filled the flower vases of the Northern Italian cities as does the South of France for us to-day.

Pæstum rose trees blossomed twice a year—

"biferique rosaria Pæsti" (*Verg. Georg.* 4. 119).

Although Piranesi employed the Temple of Neptune at Pæstum to support his Etruscan theory, Pæstum was a Dorian Greek city, a colony of Sybaris, founded about 600 B.C. It was brought under Roman rule after the failure of Pyrrhus' invasion in 273 B.C.; the Saracens destroyed it in the ninth century; the site of the place is now a desolate waste. Within the walls are the ruins of three Doric temples, perhaps the most wonderful remains of Greek architecture, with the exception of the temples at Athens. There are also remains of a Roman amphitheatre and temple. The most interesting of the temples is that of Neptune, the entablature and pediments of which are practically intact. All the exterior columns and the majority of the interior were standing in Piranesi's time. There are fourteen

TEMPLE OF N

UNE AT PAESTUM.

columns on the flanks on a stylobate of three steps; the cella has two double ranges of seven Doric columns, the lower tiers of which are still complete. This temple dates from the fifth century B.C. The other, dedicated to Juno or Ceres, is constructed in a similar manner, and goes back to the sixth century B.C. Although these Doric temples had Doric columns, Piranesi took liberties, as was his custom. In his plates he has not hesitated to add to the tops of some of the Doric columns details of carved decoration distinctly Roman in character. The Basilica, which Piranesi calls "the house of the Amphictyonic Council," is built in an unusual way. Of the many theories that have been advanced to explain its uncommon plan, the most reasonable seems to be that the temple was double, with one half dedicated to the worship of Demeter, the other to Persephone. This too is of Greek Doric structure, and belongs to the early portion of the sixth century B.C. Piranesi was thus quite

wrong in his contentions about Etruscan work at Pæstum (see page 15), and he was not justified in the attempt to impose as dogma that which was no more than his personal opinion founded upon imperfect information.

The etchings of Pæstum and of the Pantheon were among the favourites of the etcher. He executed with careful detail several plates of the Pantheon and reproduced to scale plans, sections, and elevations of this building. His son Francesco also etched and published several plates of the Pantheon ; they appear in company with his father's etchings of the same building, but without acknowledgment of assistance from his father's elaborate studies, to which Francesco undoubtedly had access.

The scratch of Piranesi's needle has conjured on to paper fine old designs of every kind. American architects have drawn liberally on the output. In America, for public buildings, the Classic form of architecture is exceedingly popular — in the

Dominion singularly so. Canadian bank-buildings, and they are plentiful enough everywhere to force themselves on the eye, almost invariably suggest the Classic style of architecture. This may perhaps be traced to the Scottish element among the leading men in Canada. Edinburgh itself, Robert Adam and the Classic style have remained in the recollection of Canadians of Scottish origin, and have influenced their taste. The results are often admirable.

A few examples of the style are—the City Hall and the Illinois Trust Buildings at Chicago; the Capitol at Minneapolis; the Knickerbocker Trust Building, New York; the decorations of the Library of the University Club, New York; the interior of the Bank of Montreal at Montreal; and the treatment of the exteriors of many of the public buildings in New York. The whole design of the Station for the Pennsylvania Railroad's tunnels under the Hudson River was inspired by that of

the Baths of Caracalla. It is not altogether fanciful to assert that, frequently when credit is claimed for the Ecole des Beaux Arts a glance at a selection of Piranesi's etchings will easily provide the proper rejoinder.

During the eighteenth century it was the habit of Englishmen to travel abroad, and especially to visit Italy. Those who had sufficient funds, or credit, or neither, took to collecting *objets d'art*, not entirely as an intellectual pleasure, but because they found while in Italy it was becoming the fashion to collect. Besides, collecting not only gave the traveller occupation, it also enabled him, on his return, to produce silent evidence of that superiority with which a grand tour was considered to stamp a man, as, nowadays, heads of big game win social consideration and excite envy. Quantities of works of art were procured, often with little discrimination. Houses in England became decorated with the spoils, and the monotonous walls that are still hung with Italian paintings of

the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century owe their sombre unpopularity to the hunt for grand-tour trophies fashionable in Piranesi's time. In his day Italy was attractive for reasons other than for itself alone. There were two special reasons : Venice and Rome. Venice in the eighteenth century was the bear-garden and playground of Europe. The Bourbons ruled at Naples and Milan was subject to Austria, but Venice, her own mistress and under no external restraint, was whirling herself towards disaster in an orgy of pleasure provided by wealth acquired in the days of her earlier commercial ascendancy. Money flowed like water in Venice, and Monnier has described the scene and how her day closed to the sounds of revelry and the rattle of squandered gold.

The desire of Piranesi's father that his son should return to Venice was born of the hope that the son should benefit by the extravagances of the Venetians and by the

streams of gold poured out for works of art by visitors to their city. Venice alone among Italian cities in the eighteenth century possessed the attraction of a school of painting of her own ; she had a style of her own, and Venetian painters took rank with the most celebrated artists in Europe. There was Canaletto whose pictures can still be read for the news of his day ; they are as talkative as are the halfpenny morning papers of more modern times. There were Longhi, the Lancret of Venice, with his pastel box, Tiepolo, Guardi, Marieschi, and Bellotto. The Venice that attracted and dazzled the world of rank and fashion with her fêtes and follies, picnics, plays, people, and scandal, is all chronicled in the newspapers that Canaletto published and called pictures.

And how well he knew how to interest his readers when he threw a scarlet cloak against a piece of yellow brickwork, or made the light on a gondola's metal fittings

sing a duet with the lavender tints of the Canal. He jotted it all down for you, everything that went on, and anything he overlooked Guardi perceived and recorded. Every one went to Venice ; politics did not count there, and no Venetian had time or inclination to weary visitors with discussions of an intellectual kind.

It was in very truth the delightful place that Casanova in an outburst of honest gratitude and admiration declared the world to be. Nothing really serious was happening there in those times, except perhaps that the year 1757 was marked by a visit from an Irish giant who asserted that he was the tallest man in Europe and weighed thirty stone. The Venice of that date may perhaps be best described as Venice with the addition of still another city made up by turning Constantinople loose in Paris and then throwing in all the amusements and characteristics of modern Monte Carlo. It did not, in 1765, leave even Gibbon unmoved.

"The spectacle of Venice afforded some hours of astonishment." As Gibbon usually thought in centuries the word "hours" is pleasing. Beckford called the Campanile the Tower of Babel; Goethe was fascinated by the glittering enchantment of Venice, and Voltaire epitomises the matter by that scene in *Candide* where the hero, having met Cacambo, sups in Venice with six chance companions who turn out to be throneless kings holiday-making. Everything was thought of in the diminutive and frivolous key:—in the morning a little prayer, in the afternoon a little card-playing, in the evening a little love-making. Tiepolo became Tiepoletto. There was reverence for nothing, except for Night; the respectful attitude of the Venetian towards the Beauty of Night was as extraordinary as it was humble.

In no capital, indeed in no city in the world was society more polished, foolish, elegant, spendthrift, and entertaining than at

Venice, and the very excesses of frivolity helped to provide the reaction which indirectly induced the cultivated and wealthy to turn towards the quiet pleasures of collecting works of art. The extravagances were almost beyond conception. The Pisani family entertained Gustavus of Sweden in such a lavish fashion that he declared it would have been impossible for him to return the hospitality. Monnier relates in his delightful book that in the winter of 1782 the future Czar Paul and his wife were received with fêtes of a magnificence equalled only in the pages of the *Arabian Nights*: a regatta on the Canal, a bull-fight in the Piazza, a banquet in the theatre of S. Samuele, the auditorium and whole stage of which were hung from ceiling to floor with satin and silver; and when the Emperor Joseph II. came, the entire dock of St. Mark was turned into a magician's lake and a garden of enchantment, with wooded islets, music, myrtle groves, nymphs and

grottos, and at night Venice was illuminated and dressed with flags. The private libraries of the great Venetian families were the admiration of every student, and the Forsetti had founded the finest botanical garden in the world. There was a private Academy of fine Arts in the home of the Pisani, and Pietro Longhi was its curator. Rosalba was painting everybody ; Pasquali, Albrizzi, and Zatta were producing books that were the most delicious specimens of the printer's art. Casanova was practising for his own amusement the adventures which he afterwards recorded for our instruction. Da Ponte was composing libretti for Mozart ; all were enjoying themselves, some in scoffing at the serious who, in turn, philosophised about the fun of the scoffers. And, lest anything should be wanting to make the whole perfect, Venice was sprinkled with an adequate seasoning of great English milords with the spleen.

But Piranesi would not leave Rome, the other magnet, from the poles of

FONTANA DI

VI AT ROME.

which flowed currents charged with sentimental and political attraction for the opponents of the Hanoverian dynasty in Great Britain; the old Pretender lived there till his death, and Prince Charles Edward on the death of his father had made Rome his own headquarters. In the plates of Piranesi's *Vasi Candelabri* many of the names to whom certain of the plates are dedicated have a Scottish ring about them, and Sir Walter Scott's dining parlour was hung with some of the impressions. Apart from the mere pleasure of travelling in Italy and visiting Venice and Rome, wealthy Britons had taken kindly to collecting, and had by degrees acquired the habit of employing special agents in Rome to watch for, and to secure on their behalf, the prizes won by the delvings and diggings that were carried out from time to time in and around Rome.

In the days after the '45, Winckelmann was in great repute; the opinions he held, as a result of studies in Rome (published

in 1764 in his *History of Ancient Art*), had roused the enthusiasm of such men as Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe. His formulæ became a frequent theme for discussion ; his descriptions of the Two Graces, in which he developed the idea of an antithesis between the Lofty and the Beautiful, drew admiration from every scholar. Thus it was that the world of his day arrived at the point where it agreed with Winckelmann's views, and accepted them as the true expression of the general principles of the Art of Classical Antiquity. The scattered embers of artistic perception tenderly coaxed by Winckelmann, were fanned into flame by the interest excited by Piranesi's etchings ; the taste for the Antique, especially for the severity of fine statuary, grew more and more pronounced, and at length delight in æsthetic ornament burst into an intense passion.

Winckelmann and Piranesi, each from his own particular standpoint, had been educating and directing the public towards the

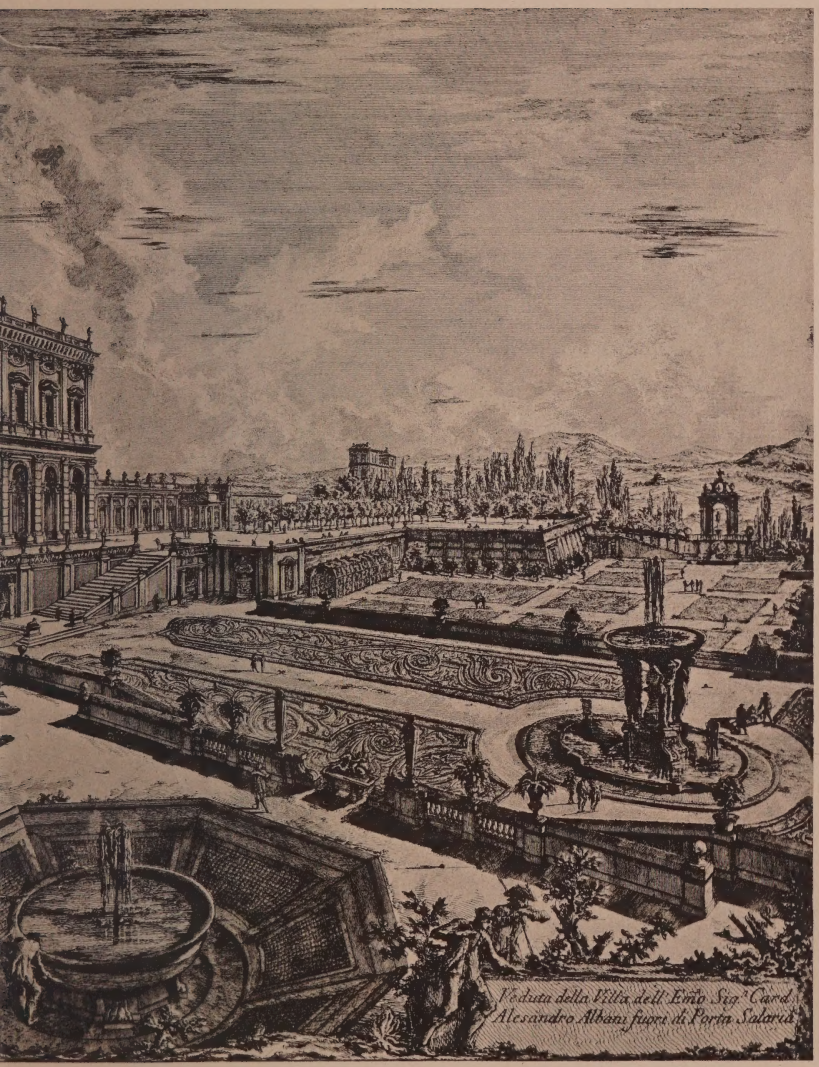
appreciation of what they described as the Beautiful and the Noble. Unceasingly they preached, one might say, as their text—

". . . exemplaria Græca
nocturna versate manu, versate diurna."

Winckelmann was the High Priest of what he himself calls "noble simplicity and calm grandeur." Piranesi, more articulate by reason of his power of etching, was "Poet Laureate of the Ruins." Both of these men were cultivated even by those Italians who, principally to be in the fashion, had thrown themselves into Art collecting. The consequence was that they were brought by their patrons and admirers into contact with the streams of visitors to Rome. As to Piranesi, his excitable and quarrelsome habits do not appear to have interfered with his popularity among collectors, nor to have lessened the general appreciation of his genius. Every door in Rome seems to have been open to him, and he was welcomed everywhere. Speaking broadly,

music, cards, Piranesi, and Art chatter provided an entertainment increasingly acceptable to the Italian nobility at Rome, and at the same time amusing to their foreign guests. If in their capacity of entertainers, in the salons of their Roman admirers, Winckelmann and Piranesi quietly proceeded with the work of educating Society, and then, to use an expressive colloquialism, "booming" the taste for collecting, they did so in no unworthy manner and for no unworthy purpose. They at last placed the real love of collecting on its firmest feet, endowed it with life, and dispatched it on its way. They inspired with their own enthusiasm, among others, the Earl of Shelburne, Charles Townley, Thomas Mansel Talbot, Lord Lincoln, Lord Egremont, Coke of Norfolk's great-uncle, Thomas Coke of Holkham, and many other lesser lights. To some extent the reputation on the Continent of Europe, for the prodigality and

VILLA ALBANI.


Veduta della Villa dell' Emo Sig.r Card.l
Alesandro Albani fuori di Porta Salara

CAR ROME.

madness, even then usually thought to be enjoyed by Englishmen, was confirmed, if not indeed founded, by the liberal manner in which the English amateurs bought or paid for their purchases. In such times and under such conditions was founded the Townley collection of marbles, now the pride of the British Museum, and with the willing assistance of the two principal British antiquarian agents in Rome, Lansdowne House and Petworth were similarly adorned by their respective owners. Numbers of other English amateurs and collectors became interested in Piranesi, and many of their names can be seen in his etchings. The principal agents assisting the collectors were two painters, but as painters they are not usually recalled. One was Jenkins, who as an artist had accompanied to Rome Richard Wilson, the great English landscape painter. Jenkins learnt much in his company, though apparently not of painting, and having amassed a considerable fortune

by favour of Clement XIV., became the principal English banker in Rome; on the arrival of the French, however, he was driven from the city, and all his property was confiscated by them. He fled to England, and died at Great Yarmouth immediately on his landing after a storm at sea, in 1798.

The other was Gavin Hamilton, of Murdieston, a portrait painter, who had spent most of his life at Rome, where he ultimately died of fright, during the French invasion in 1797.

They dabbled at first as collectors for their own pleasure, and as amateurs. But by degrees both took seriously to selling for profit, and at length were able to gather around them a valuable circle of customers. Jenkins financed the partnership, and Hamilton was the salesman. As time went on, Hamilton found his aboveground supply of *objets d'art*, provided by Francesco Piranesi and others, less than enough to meet the demand of his customers; he forthwith turned to excavating,

and with capital success. To Gavin Hamilton certainly must be given credit for having played the chief part in getting together one or more of the collections which, in course of time, went to form the British Museum.

Monsieur Geffroy, dealing with some unedited papers of Francesco Piranesi at Stockholm, tells of Gavin Hamilton. He was, says M. Geffroy, celebrated in Rome, "par ses belles manières qui n'excluaient pas l'habileté," and he rendered himself interesting by the tears he shed on effecting a sale of a work of art. It is reassuring, however, to learn that he solaced himself with large profits for the pain he suffered by being deprived of the pleasure of retaining any particular specimen. It fell to Hamilton's good fortune to deal with such treasures of the Villa Montalto as remained from the collection gathered together there by Sixtus v., while that Pope was still Cardinal Peretti de Montalto; but the supply of fine things ran short of the demands

of Hamilton's customers. And the Villa Montalto stood on no ordinary soil. It occupied the spot which once had been the garden of Mæcenas, with all its masterpieces. Nor could Jenkins materially assist in keeping pace with the demand, though good fortune afforded him the opportunity of stripping, not only the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, but also the Villa Mattei.

The clamours of Hamilton's and Jenkins' eager buyers were difficult to satisfy, and therefore, it is said, Jenkins caused cameos and intaglios to be made, and, on propitious nights, planted teeming furrows of them in the ruins of the Colosseum. The abundant harvest followed in proper season. He then passed on to the next step in the rotation, and sowed a crop of sepulchral urns bearing attractive but ill-fitting inscriptions. Joseph Nollekens, R.A., relates, says "Rainy Day" Smith, that he saw Jenkins' men preparing the cameos, and that Jenkins gave him a "whole handful to say nothing about the matter to any one else but myself."

Farming under such conditions could not fail to be lucrative, and Hamilton then looked around for an increased acreage of likely soil. His next move was to turn an inquisitive spade in the grounds of the Villa of Hadrian at Tivoli. The Villa had, even prior to that date, yielded many fine things. He drained a swamp there in 1769, and dug. The swamp itself was the bed of the Lake Pantanello ; it lay about two miles from Tivoli, and although formerly a portion of Hadrian's Tiburtine Villa, was at that time the property of the Lolli family. An excavation had already been made on the site by that family, but Hamilton determined to reinvestigate the spot. His proceedings are narrated by Dallaway, who quotes Hamilton's letters to Townley, the collector of the marbles now in the British Museum. Hamilton's men found an outlet for the water of Pantanello by working a passage to an old drain cut in the tufa. They worked for weeks by lamplight up to

the knees in stagnant slime, full of toads and serpents, but found little, Lolli having already discovered all there was. Some labourers, however, who formerly had been employed by Lolli, put the explorers on a fresh scent, and a hole containing trunks of trees was at length discovered. Here Hamilton's success, genuine or not, was certainly extraordinary. More than sixty pieces of sculpture, some of them of extreme beauty and fineness, came to light. Quantities of statues and trees, the remains, probably, of a sacred grove, were found, and, of the sculptures taken from the hole, the following were bought by Lord Shelburne, at the costs noted, and are at Lansdowne House—

Statue of Cincinnatus	£500
Statue of Paris	200
Cupid and Psyche	300
Antinous	50
Antinous as an Egyptian Deity . .	75
Bust of a Victor in the Olympic Games	75
Pudicitia	50

Head of a Muse	£15
Two Egyptian Idols in black marble .	150
Bas-relief in black marble	50

Hamilton went farther afield after the neighbourhood of the Pantanello swamp had been cropped barren. He began to delve the whole district lying on the outskirts of Rome, succeeding meantime in attracting foreign Sovereigns as buyers of the spoils. In fact, Hamilton and Jenkins reigned supreme in the salons as leaders of the then prevailing fashion, which became so attractive and popular that at length the crowned and coroneted heads of Europe began to devote themselves to the collecting of antique statuary with the zeal nowadays applied by their successors to the doing of humane and charitable works. Goethe himself, in his *Winckelmann*, claims that posterity is indebted to Gavin Hamilton for having widened the field from which painters could draw their subjects, for they were enabled by

the study of masterpieces, unearthed by Hamilton, to produce work with increased correctness of drawing, and with greater regard for beauty of form.

Hamilton extended his researches to Tor Colombaro, on the Appian Way. Two spots he excavated, one a temple of Domitian, and the other a Villa of Gallienus, both the property of Cardinal Chigi, and about nine miles from Rome. Gallienus had robbed the temple and had transferred its contents to his own Villa. The Lansdowne Marcus Aurelius (£300), the Amazon (£200), the Hermes (Meleager) (£600) owe to Hamilton their rescue from the soil on which the Villa stood, as does the Discobolos in the Musée Pio-Clementino. In view of the prices paid for works of art at the present day, it is interesting to note in the Report of the Elgin Committee of the House of Commons (p. 98) that it is stated that the Lansdowne collection of Roman marbles was

acquired for £7000, and Payne Knight in his evidence before the Committee placed the value of the collection at £11,000. Hamilton also explored Monte Cagnolo, the Villa of Antoninus Pius, but as his commission from Lord Shelburne had been suspended in 1773, the Lansdowne collection contains nothing from that spot. In Hamilton's letters to Lord Shelburne frequent reference is made to the necessity of "smuggling" the pieces of sculpture out of Papal dominions, as the Pope insisted upon having the first refusal of them for himself. Hamilton records that he had to do certain things for the purpose "of keeping Visconti and his companion my friends." Visconti superintended archæological researches on behalf of the Papal authorities, having succeeded Winckelmann as Surveyor of Antiquities, and he exercised that office till his death in 1784. His famous son, Ennio Quirino Visconti, produced, among other publica-

tions, a work on the Inscriptions of the Jenkins collection, and followed his father in the completion of the celebrated work *Museum Pio-Clementinum*. His views must be accepted with reserve, for the Danish archæologist Zoega has said that Visconti was always ready with an explanation whether the subject admitted of an explanation or not. In the letter of 1st July 1773, Hamilton informs Lord Shelburne "Piranese is come down of his price of the candelabri to 130 zechines which he says is the lowest he can sell them for, so shall await your lordship's further orders." He again refers to these "candelabri of Piranese" in a letter of 9th August 1775. In a Memorandum by Lord Shelburne on his collection of sculpture (Feb. 1777) there is the following entry :—

"No. 3. Blue Room.

No. 2. Urns and Vases. I have 6 of these in all—all very indifferent except one I bought of Dean the Painter and which he had of Piranesi. It is engraved in his works."

Although the fashion had taken some years to work its way through to the highest stratum of society, it had been assisted on its journey by the habits then prevailing among the Italians, and more particularly among the Venetians. As a reaction and protest against the incessant gaieties and the thoughtless extravagances of the day, many well-placed Italians, even if comfortably endowed, had, for some years before the publication of Piranesi's etchings, maintained the thrifty but ungenial practice of not allowing their homes to be used for hospitable gatherings, or indeed for scarcely any simple social meeting wherein monetary outlay would be incurred. Every effort was made to reduce the housekeeper's expenditure to a minimum, but the leading families made it a point of honour to divert a portion of their retrenchments towards the upkeep and replenishing of family collections of works of art, and others began to study

and to collect, in order to acquire stronger title to social advancement. These motives were nearly sufficient to render a fine work of art certain of obtaining proper recognition ; but there was an additional incentive to collecting, because the taste for gambling, always present among the idle of all countries, could be gratified by the hazard of a speculation in mining for statues and for objects of archæological interest. Among the spoils removed in after years from Italy to the Louvre were many pieces of sculpture which Francesco Piranesi or Hamilton or Jenkins had seen dug up, and the cost of whose discovery represents an Italian noble's larder economies.

Catherine II., Augustus of Saxony, Ferdinand IV. of Naples, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany specially distinguished themselves as collectors. But with Gustavus III. of Sweden rests the supreme distinction of having been the first Sovereign actually to maintain at Rome a properly accredited

Minister for the transaction of affairs connected with Art, for that and for no other purpose. Gustavus, while Crown Prince, had shown an early inclination towards collecting works of art. This taste had been encouraged and educated by his tutor, the cultivated Tessin, himself an ardent collector, who, in former days, while Swedish Ambassador at the Court of Louis xv., had been the friend of Boucher, and on terms of intimacy with the artistic Bohemia of Paris of that date.

Gustavus's taste for collecting increased with age; he interested himself in all matters connected with Art, properly avoiding "oil painting" as the usual and sole definition of Art, and by degrees got together a collection of objects of the utmost beauty, which he later on handed over to the Museum at Stockholm.

Now, among the foreign diplomats accredited to the Swedish King was Bianconi, Minister from the Saxon Court, and a

personal friend of Piranesi. Bianconi, who wrote Piranesi's obituary notice in the *Antologia Romana*, formed a link between the etcher and the Crown Prince of Sweden ; and when the latter, after two journeys to Italy, at length determined to enrich the Stockholm Museum with specimens of the Antique, he turned for assistance to Francesco, the son of the now deceased Piranesi. Gustavus had first seen Francesco at Pisa some years before, and Francesco Piranesi thus became the Swedish Agent, formally appointed, but of course not received by the Pope, being the representative of a Protestant Sovereign.

The famous statue of Endymion at Stockholm was bought by Gustavus III. at Francesco Piranesi's recommendation. It is recognised as being a fine work, and is considered to be of earlier date than that of the reign of Hadrian, from the ruins of whose Villa at Tivoli it was reported to have been dug. Whether there is ground for thinking it was the fruit

of carefully sown seed, it is not necessary to discuss here in connection with Piranesi, as he was not in any way concerned with that part of the statue's possible history.

After some years, Gustavus purchased from Francesco Piranesi the collection formed by his father, paying Francesco a life annuity of 630 sequins[1] in return, which Francesco seems to have enjoyed for perhaps fourteen years.

Giovanni Piranesi's collection contained many items, the alleged origin of which was Hadrian's Villa, and probably they had actually come from the Villa, in view of the fact that the elder Piranesi had died just before Hamilton and Jenkins began serious operations at Tivoli; and although one recalls the suspicion attached to spoils from Hadrian's Villa, it must not be forgotten that Giovanni Piranesi had himself investigated and surveyed the Villa at about the time of Adam's visit

[1] A sequin was worth about 9s.

in 1757. With the collection were sent to Stockholm two catalogues of the various items it contained. They describe accurately how the articles had passed into Giovanni Piranesi's possession, and give the names of their restorers, and state what restorations had been carried out.

Continual streams of Art treasures from Rome at length roused the Papal authorities into action, and Clement XIV. and Pius VI., each in turn, placed legal restrictions against the removal of masterpieces for the purpose of sale and export. Papal funds, at this juncture, were instrumental in founding the Pio-Clementino Museum, and Clement XIV. went so far as to appoint a competent person, Visconti, to superintend all archæological excavations within the limits of Papal territory. Pius VI. took great interest in archæological research, assisting Francesco Piranesi, who dedicated to him a series of etchings of temples. The frontispiece of the series bears the portrait of Pius VI.,

together with indications of that Pope having been the restorer of the Appian Way, and the benefactor of the Pio-Clementino Museum.

Thus, the father having played his part in kindling the antiquarian taste of Europe, his son, Francesco Piranesi, completed the work of assisting to bring the desire for the possession of masterpieces to such a pitch as to awake eventually a sense of duty which compelled the Papal Government to join in the search, and at the same time to place itself at the head of the investigations, with a view not only of preventing dispersion beyond Italy, but also of filling the Pio-Clementino Museum.

After the assassination of Gustavus III., Francesco Piranesi's position changed considerably: he became a sort of Swedish Consul. The Duke of Sudermania, Regent for Gustavus Adolphus IV., desiring to rid himself of a certain Count Gustav Armfelt, sent that nobleman on a mission to the

Italian Court. Lady Holland met him at Florence, and speaks of him as "Armfelt with the white handkerchief round his arm, a pose which gained him considerable female interest." Francesco attached himself officially to Armfelt. Although Sweden had never varied in her chivalrous attachment to the Bourbons, Armfelt was under strict orders not to meddle with matters connected with the French *émigrés*, many of whom had been his friends in earlier days. These orders Armfelt disregarded.

Piranesi then played the spy on Armfelt, writing frequent dispatches to the Government at Stockholm on the condition of affairs at Rome. This correspondence is in the Royal Archives at Stockholm, and it affords a peep, from an interesting angle, into the history of what was alleged to be going on in Rome during the period of the French Revolution.

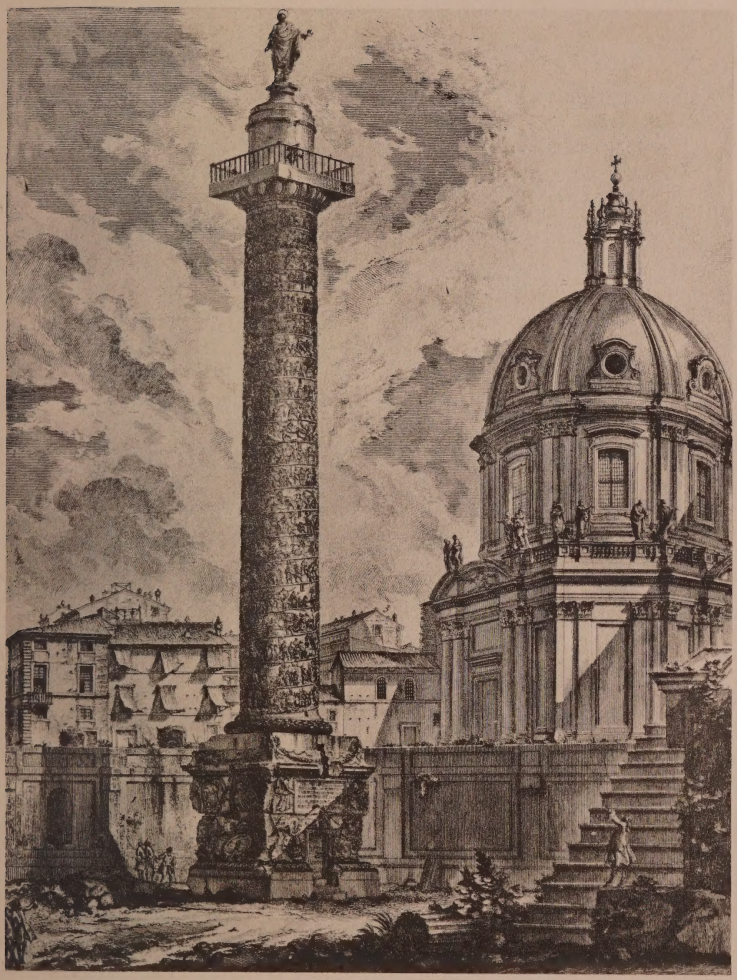
Francesco was not, it seems, a man possessed of too acute a sense of honour,

and, although it cannot be proved positively that such was really the case, I am inclined to think that a considerable number of the etchings bearing his name published by him after his father's death were simply etched by Francesco from carefully drawn detailed plans made by his father. This refers particularly to some of the Herculaneum and Pantheon plates signed by Francesco, and I am of the opinion that he deliberately concealed the fact that he owed anything, and perhaps everything, in connection with those plates, to material provided by his father. My view is moreover strengthened by the fact that Tipaldo does not regard the Theatre of Herculaneum plates as other than the father's work—he entirely ignores Francesco in relation to them. He bases his opinions on those of Bianconi, who was, as has been previously stated, personally acquainted with Giovanni Piranesi.

Having exhausted the possibilities of

the unworthy intrigues attached to his office as spy, Francesco Piranesi sank into depths of an even more unsavoury nature, by acting as an official for the administration of the finances of the Roman Republic, after Rome had been occupied by the French. Michaud is unsupported in the statement that he was sent as Minister to France. His friend Ennio Quirino Visconti, however, had allowed himself to be made a Consul when the Roman Republic was set up. When Napoleon removed to France some of the finest specimens of ancient Art, Visconti took them to Paris, where he was employed as Conservateur des Antiques, and in 1814 was among the first to detect the superlative merit of the Elgin marbles.

At length finding his own position uncongenial, Francesco Piranesi, towards the middle of 1798, packed up the copper plates of his father's etchings and his working tools as a craftsman, and trans-



TRAJAN'S COLUMN AT ROME.

ferred his energies to Paris, going thither by sea. During the voyage the ship fell in with and was captured by a squadron under Sir Thomas Troubridge, which had become detached from Lord St. Vincent's fleet. Nelson was then at Naples on the *Vanguard*, and British ships were actively employed in that part of the Mediterranean in blockading ports so as to prevent supplies reaching the French troops. The captured ship containing Piranesi's property was an armed French brig laden for the most part with spoil taken by the French from the Italians. The name of Giovanni Piranesi and the fame of his etchings were evidently known to Admiral Troubridge, for he felt respect for the etchings sufficient to cause him to persuade the officers and men who had effected the capture to restore the copper plates to the son of the etcher. Further, he obtained from the French Government the concession that these plates should be admitted into France free of duty,

and that Francesco Piranesi should be protected in his future possession of them. After Troubridge had succeeded in making these arrangements, Francesco came on board the Admiral's ship and received back his property. At the same time he presented to Troubridge a complete set of impressions.

This set of the etchings passed afterwards through the hands of several other owners, and eventually came into the possession of Alderman Josiah Boydell, Master of the Stationers' Company, during the early years of the nineteenth century; Troubridge having found these etchings scarcely suitable for the cabin of a sea captain had, with the help of Tucker (Lord St. Vincent's secretary), exchanged them for a library of books more fitted for his purpose at sea, and the books thus received by him in exchange went down with him in the *Blenheim*.

At Paris, Francesco Piranesi devoted his energies to making casts from the Antique, and to republishing his father's etchings,

together with those which he himself had produced. He dedicated a portion of the impressions forming the edition to his patron Gustavus III., and this is the French edition of the etchings which is, as has already been explained, vastly inferior to the original Roman impressions.

It is to be regretted that Troubridge did not throw the copper plates overboard ; it would have spared Piranesi's reputation from the violence that is still done to it by the coarse and spoiled impressions that were, from time to time, issued by any enterprising person who cared to hire the worn-out plates for a day's printing. Such impressions grossly misrepresent Piranesi's work. I believe these plates can still be hired.

The French Government assisted Francesco, recognising that this publication was likely to be of national benefit, as indeed it was, though the benefit was not confined to France alone, because it caused

Piranesi's work to be distributed and placed at the disposal of designers generally ; but, none the less, Francesco achieved no financial success, and notwithstanding his Swedish annuity, some of his plates and moulds had to go. He was probably not in comfortable circumstances at the time of his death in January 1810, twelve years after leaving Rome, but the world of to-day has the satisfaction of knowing, now that the money is useless to Piranesi and to his son Francesco, that the public is willing to pay, for a pair of original impressions of certain of the father's etchings, as much as would have in his lifetime maintained both these men decently for perhaps a month.

It was Giovanni Piranesi who taught folks the Poetry of Ruins. For centuries the débris of Antique Art in Italy had lain half submerged, dismissed from the care of man, and abolished from recollection. In company with Winckelmann he helped to drag them, as it were, to the light once

more, and he lent his needle to bring about an extension of the knowledge of the Beautiful to that heritage of Art which the world owned, but had overlooked. Folks awoke, recognised, admired, and wondered how blind they and their forefathers had been, and proceeded to rediscover architecture in Italy.

The time is now ripe to rediscover the neglected Piranesi, and to give him credit for what he really deserves. He bore the brunt and he is entitled to some of the praise. What Horace said of poets is equally applicable to the case of etchers. The whims of fashion and even taste change so rapidly and unreasonably that nothing short of real genius can survive. But to-day, a century and a half after the time when his best work appeared, it is possible to adjudge Piranesi worthy of more praise than was bestowed on him during his lifetime ; while he lived his work had the charm of novelty ; that has long worn off,

and notwithstanding change of fashion, his best work takes rank as Classic. In calculating the exact position of Giovanni Piranesi as an artist, and in fixing his place as an etcher, so much at least will be conceded to him.

But it is unpardonable to make the mistake of discussing him simply as an artist and an etcher, as a defiant, intolerant, industrious, inspired producer of etchings of which the best are of wonderful merit. One may smile at his visions, his improvisations; one may pour ridicule on his exaggerations, on his untruthful renderings of his subjects; one can take account to their full of all such abatements; they were caused by imagination, vivid enough and often poetical, but they were not of a kind that could mar his taste and judgment.

It must be remembered that when Piranesi dealt with a scene which was familiar to him, and to his public, he merely employed a rhetorical framework,

and he tried to drive home his lesson with all the eloquence his needle possessed. He tried to fascinate the eye and amuse the mind, and with that intention permitted himself to enliven the details by picturesque draughtsmanship, embodying representations which were sometimes untrue to the original. Did not Livy threaten that he would have made Pompey win the battle of Pharsalia if the balance of the sentence could have been improved by the change? Livy was not talking at random, he was only teaching in a figurative but illustrative manner the axiom that the paramount duty of an artist is to be an artist—in other words, the doctrine of Art for Art's sake. Voltaire, too, gives permission : he says, " La grâce en s'exprimant vaut mieux que ce qu'on dit."

Piranesi's needle never dawdled and, although from time to time it veered in many directions, the Classic was always North : he held to force and majesty with evident pleasure, there was nothing weak in

his intentions ; like a famous Master of the Rolls, "he might be right, he sometimes was ; he might be wrong, that he was more often ; but he never doubted." What the etcher wanted to say, he said, and with a Titanic boldness. Of points and of weakness of another kind we can take full reckoning ; certain strains in his character can be remembered and passed over, for they have no real bearing on a calculation made for the purpose of arriving at a just appreciation of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

He began his artistic life at a period when the soothing effect of restrained statuary failed to obtain recognition, and the most beautiful and dignified of ancient monuments were regarded heedlessly, or carelessly dismissed as "interesting old ruins." He started by enabling, and ended by compelling, the world to use the epic grandeur of those monuments as ideals for work that was, in course of time, to adorn the avenues and thoroughfares of the

capitals of the civilised world. His spirit moved happily through life so long as it could hold communion with the friends he loved, the ancient monuments; he dreamed of them, he discussed them, he exhibited their beauties to the world in flashes of wonderful light. He said what he had to say, he repeated it, and then, for fear that his point had not been understood, proceeded to illustrate his views in a contradictory manner. And so we have the enormous number of plates, gems of etching, it is true, but perhaps too many of them, too many suns in Piranesi's firmament, till we become confused and begin to doubt, as did Cowley, whether the Milky Way is composed of stars, there are so many of them.

"Men doubt, because they stand so thick i' th' sky,
If those be stars, which paint the galaxy."[1]

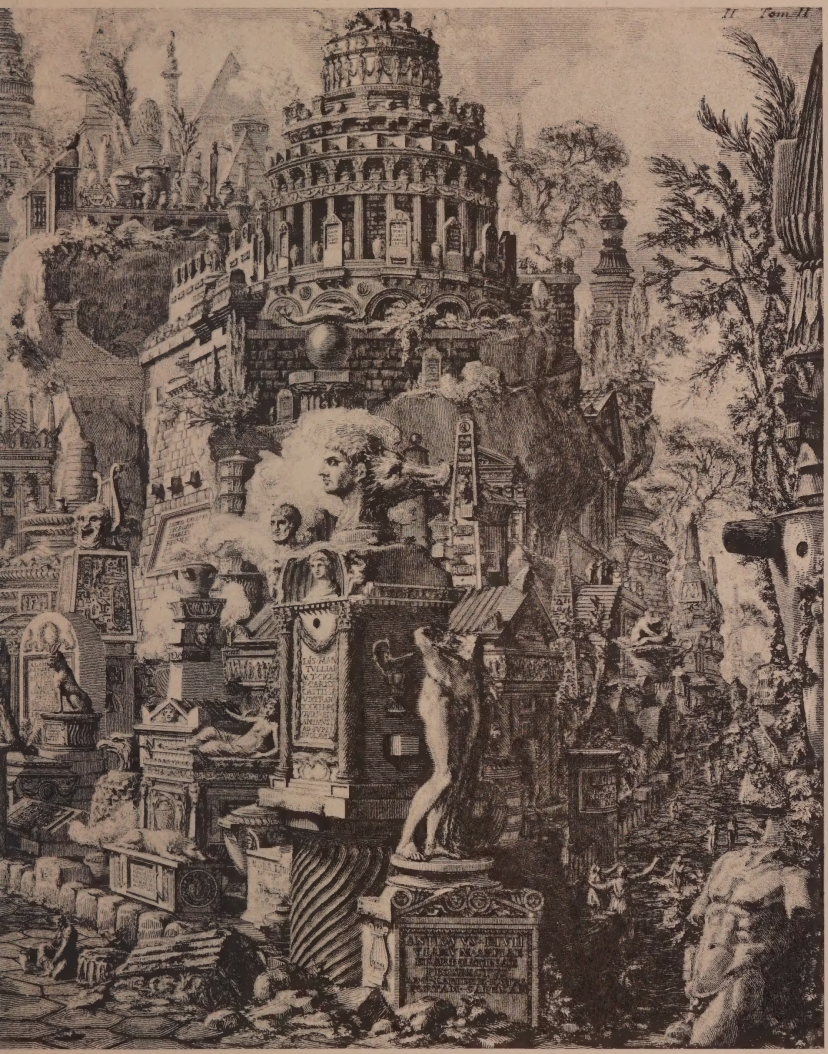
He regarded the gratification of the æsthetic sense as one of the principal functions of his own existence, and, de-

[1] Cowley, *Ode to Wit.*

siring lofty emotions, turned in his search for them to noble sources. Thus it was that he loved noble effect, and one of the results of his work is the delight experienced nowadays by people who never suspect that it is partly due to him that they owe the opportunity of taking their pleasure in æsthetic ornament. Around his work is the indescribable air of intimate friendship with the Antique ; he found it more difficult to be a modern than an ancient, and the result is that there was produced a style peculiar to Piranesi, a style which is at once decorative and classically pure, and no less graceful than it is ingenious ; he approached his subject with knowledge, and distilled abundant treasure which he encased in honest dignity and adapted to modern usefulness.

The public and private architecture of recent times has tended towards the Classic and early Renaissance styles ; to the draughtsman engaged in such work, Piranesi's plates,

IMAGINARY SCEN



THE APPIAN WAY.

especially those which contain restrained ornamental details, with their simple mouldings, their restful but interesting friezes, details condensed by the etcher into an essence of good taste, are as salt for the flavouring of food. The modern draughtsman can extract his grains of salt from Piranesi, and everything upon which they are sprinkled acquires an improved savour and becomes more interesting.

From these etchings of ornamental work innumerable ideas may be taken for the interior decoration of buildings. Furniture, walls, ceilings, friezes, fireplaces, and what not, all levy contribution on Piranesi.

Whether, in the long run, Art really profits by such a storehouse, is questionable. Does the schoolboy profit by a crib ?

Such a crib certainly spares the modern designer much labour,—he can borrow whatever he may lack,—but it enervates : by enabling the draughtsman to give forth ideas without effort of thought, it removes

the stimulant which begets originality. It of course helps the designer to produce work which will not render him ridiculous,—he may indeed attain mediocrity, he will be safe from blame,—but the result will not be sufficient to earn him much praise. In unskilful hands, too, purple patches are the result. Still, as a rule, apart from the question of originality, Piranesi's help has usually so successful an effect that we can afford to overlook the work in which he is ill-treated. And besides, few minds are capable of originality: the ability to originate a design which is interesting is even more rarely met with, and how seldom is given the power to produce a scheme not only original but interesting, and the talent to express it delicately and to practical purpose.

Is it not, therefore, preferable, on the whole, that the would-be designer should content himself with borrowing, and even mangling, an idea taken from Piranesi's records,

than that he should be compelled to strive for the originality which, in many cases, gives birth to the abortions that from time to time horrify the eye and delight the popular Press?

The science of Hypothetics is not a fruitful one; but people have often amused themselves by speculating on the probable consequence of events which have not happened, or imagining events to have happened in a manner different from that which has been actually the case. They will draw deductions from the imaginary premise that Eude's daughter had not married the Emir, or that Livy's hypothetical invasion of Italy by Alexander had actually taken place. In a similar way a student of Art might fashion a nightmare by imagining the appearance of the interiors of most British homes to-day had Giovanni Piranesi's birth and work been deferred fifty years. Piranesi was one of those fortunate men who have appeared at the juncture

when their skill and individuality afford the greatest service. The date at which his peculiar abilities became available caused the production of his etchings to affect vitally, not only Chambers, but Chippendale, Adam, Sheraton, and many other of the English furniture designers.

From the middle of the eighteenth century till now, although there have been, in that time, periods, during which, spurious sensibility, expressed by architecture in particular and by form in general, has self-consciously thrust itself forward only to be betrayed by its awkwardness and vulgarity, design, influenced by Piranesi, as applied to the treatment of English buildings, public no less than private, has undergone a change. The effect of this can be seen on all sides, to be remarked with increasing distinctness in buildings of recent date.

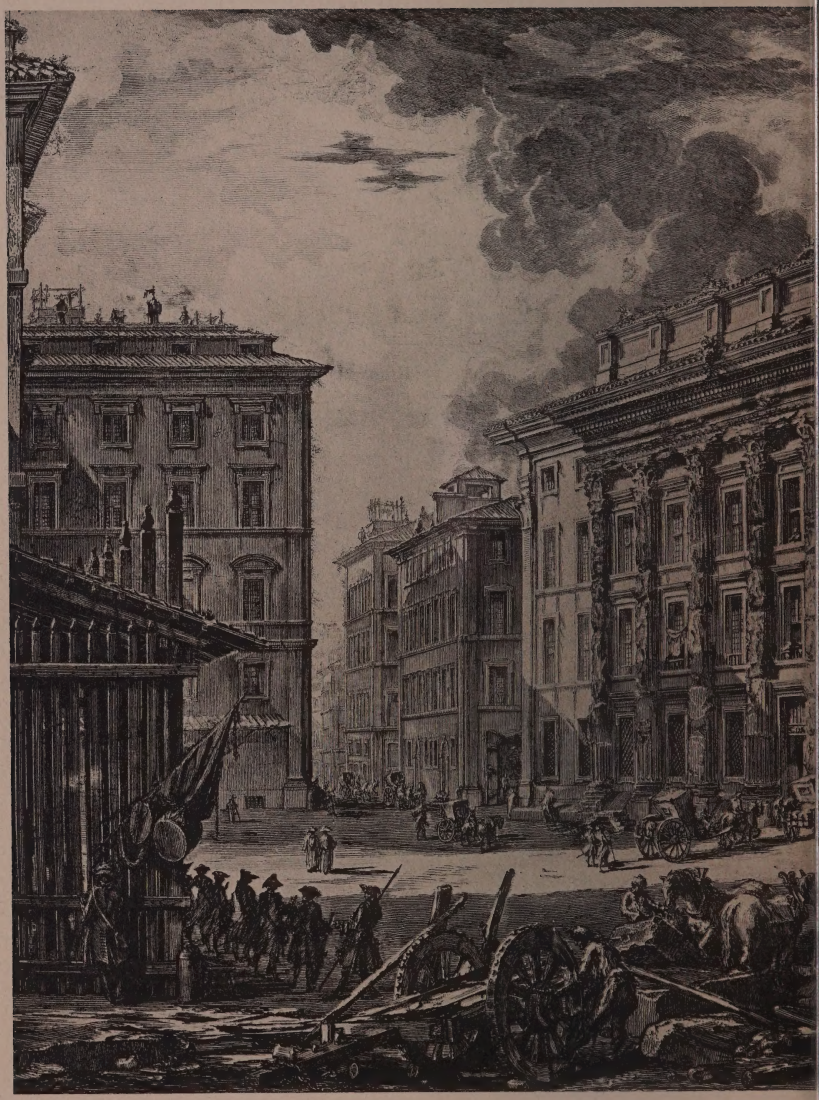
It must be borne in mind that, although following the usual custom Piranesi called himself an architect, he knew little of con-

struction or calculation, and less of the methods of carrying actual work into execution. The making of working plans was out of his province, and he rarely addressed himself to that portion of the architect's profession. Execution with the needle he excelled in, but his genius was for design. An absence of prettiness from most of his work indicates the prevailing emotions that governed his technique. The austerity of his taste tells its tale of profound passion and of the man struggling with the problem of personal existence. Towards the close of his life, when he had won through the struggle, some measure of prosperity bringing with it a desire to please, weakened a high-strung energy, and he indulged a hitherto suppressed quality of prettiness; yet even then, whenever he was etching in a fortunate moment, prettiness rose to beauty itself.

Piranesi's etchings are the sole records of his character, and are all that exists to indicate his qualities. By them his life may be

analysed. They show that he possessed ability of a first-class order, and taste of the purest kind entirely devoid of pettiness ; his work is usually marked with poetry and dignified sentiment, with a sense of style and appreciation of history, sensuality is entirely absent from it. From his etchings we can also see we have to deal with a man of nimble brain, quick to make a statement, intolerant of the views of others, morbidly sensitive to criticism, ready to elevate his personal opinion into a dogma, garrulous in his work, the victim of a temperament mainly composed of exaltation and depression.

In his treatise on the *Laocoön* Lessing contrasts the stoical demeanour of Northern peoples with the exuberance of feeling common among the Greeks and Romans. Philoctetes shrieks with the smart of his wound, and Achilles rolls in the sand overcome with grief. There was in Piranesi that same lack of self-restraint which has descended to the modern inhabitants of Southern Europe.



DOGANA DI TE

AT ROME.

Extravagances in style, extravagances in ideas, can be detected in much of his work, but, with the exception of the chimney-pieces, not extravagances in taste. The judgment of taste, which is supposed to come late to servants at the altar of Literature, was mature at an early stage in Piranesi's life.

It is too often forgotten that in Art everything depends upon the taste of the craftsman. To him taste is more vital than ability and industry. Should the cunning worker, though master of the technical portion of his art, be lacking in taste, he is a failure as an artist. Try most of Piranesi's etchings on the touchstone of taste, and the mark left shows no base alloy. Had he not possessed that supreme quality, one shudders to think how mischievous would have been Piranesi's work and teaching, and how deplorable would have been his influence had his needle been wielded to express vulgar ideals. His industry could not be excelled; his craftsmanship was assisted by

the strength of conviction that he had a mission. Skill could have gone no farther, and it had taste as a faithful ally.

He summed up the results of the etcher's craft and carried them to a point beyond which they could not be improved. The enthusiasm he felt for what he saw and what he imagined took the form of an exaltation of happiness ; he was ravished with the calm beauty with which his perceptions were illuminated. The delight he took in his work was, moreover, animated by a conscientiousness, marked with a genuine contempt for those who dared to question the superlative excellence of the Roman architecture which provided him with subjects.

A sense of humour was wanting in Piranesi's equipment, though the incongruous appealed to him. Of subtlety he had none : the natural, " the exquisite natural," as Joubert defined that word, was his weapon. If he departed from the natural, it was for the purpose of pleasing and explaining,

and when simplicity alone would not be beautiful. He made no attempt to hide the departure; he, like Joubert, "merely passed through the clouds in order to mount the skies." Endowed with strong views, great bodily energy, eager to produce the best in his power, he never paused to consider his personal dignity when doing what he thought was right. It was against his nature to attempt to lead, his method was to impose. Neither did he fear to run the risk of appearing ridiculous by that readiness for disputation which, in other or ordinary circumstances, would have been scarcely excusable. But, in a state of affairs where it was necessary to make a stir in order to gain attention to the subject in which he, almost single-handed, had taken the initiative, the quarrels of the argumentative Piranesi must not be made to count for too much in an estimate of the character of the man. They can be understood; they are perhaps pardonable. He merely perceived

instinctively that unless opinions are set forth in an offensive manner the indolent world usually fails to notice them, and he acted on the theory that people would not bother themselves about a subject unless he began by making it bother them.

Architectural etching has culminated with him. His successors are all able to reproduce in a way, more or less, his characteristics. They have, up to the present, however, suggested no improvement or further development of the Art as he left it.

The massive simplicity conveyed by his work, his clear vision, his swiftness of execution, his peculiar power of carrying conviction and of expressing with directness the salient points of his subject, render plain to the student that Nobleness which it was the etcher's aim to reproduce.

His genius stamped the art of etching with a distinction which etching, as an Art in connection with Architecture, had never possessed before. An impetuous

enthusiasm thus equipped endowed his work with an eloquence which prompts a feeling that it was an inspired hand that guided his needle.

Piranesi's work conveys the same impression to the eye the least acquainted with fine architecture as to the mind filled with practical knowledge of technical Art. To each, the impression is of a beautiful subject, composed with perfect taste, and represented in such a manner that it is of the highest interest. So fine is the etching that the needle seems to have worked without effort. Indeed it is so, for Piranesi's work was the reflex of his feelings—his hand was almost unconscious of what it did. The result, so far as opportunity afforded, was that the gift of consummate skill given him by Nature was exercised in its utmost capacity. And notwithstanding all this, he never had his fair chance of showing his highest and unfettered ability.

It remains only to wonder whether the early struggle for a livelihood through which he worked, whether the restrictions imposed by the lack of adequate means in the first years of his married life, acted as a clog upon Piranesi.

Would fuller power and opportunity to spread his wings, and to give free play to his imagination and skill, have enabled him to realise himself in some permanent masterpiece of architecture? With opportunity and encouragement could he, under improved circumstances, have put forth ideas which, when turned into stone and metal, would have produced a result such as would have made his reputation more widely known and more lasting?

The same thought and some remorse are experienced in regarding the lives of other men who were almost his contemporaries. For example, we recall Burns, a pauper but for Lord Dundas's £70 a year; then Beethoven. Porson might have pro-

duced we know not what, had he been encouraged and relieved; though he now lies at the foot of Newton's statue, he was, during his lifetime, and while at work, driven to fall back on an income of under £2 a week, contributed by friends as a protest against the treatment he had received from other quarters. Then there is Fielding, denied help to the extent that a pawnable coat was his best friend. And Thackeray said that Fielding's name has been written, as it were, on the dome of St. Peter's, for Gibbon declared that "The romance of *Tom Jones*, that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escurial and the imperial eagle of the House of Austria." Johnson received a pension from Bute, it is true, but though it saved him from writs it came twenty-five years too late to be really effective, and it is well to recall that Johnson had been enjoying the assistance of the pension already for seventeen years before his

best work, *The Lives of the Poets*, appeared ; and it was only his own undaunted courage and perseverance which had till then enabled him to maintain himself, pursue his labours, and produce fine work at a wage less affluent than a fish-hawker could have earned. Theocritus tells Diophantus that poverty alone awakens the arts ; that may be so, but if it be argued that all masterpieces have been born in poverty there are Dante, Chaucer, Michelangelo, Tintoret, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and Goethe, to prove the contrary. Nor have many masterpieces been produced by men of great wealth ; for riches enervate as much as extreme poverty paralyses. Difficulties form the finest stone out of which character may be hewn and penury goes far to spur a man. But penury damps his spirit by clogging his powers ; and the energy and force of character sufficient to assist a man to win that position wherein he may be able to realise himself are not always those qualities

which are the companions of genius. The kindly hand, therefore, which will ward off grinding want is the good fortune we should desire for the development of genius.

When we look over the roll of the splendid company of men whose wants and distresses might have been lessened and whose opportunities might have been increased, we wonder what greater monuments of their genius might have been added to the adornment of Literature and Art had we but appreciated their work in time, and had we been ready to afford them the means and occasion to produce that which they knew was within them.

Surely there must be good reason for suspecting that something is continually being lost to us by our inopportune callousness and blindness. Do we not often regret that genius is recognised only when it is too late for friendly help to be of avail? But will the world take a lesson? Has

it a memory? Can it learn to recognise the sparkle of a gem before it has been appraised in the money market? Why should the word "modern" act as a curse upon fine work? and why should the word "genius" be interpreted as "the skill of dead men"? The skill of the dead receives the high monetary quotation, and it is the traffic in it which discourages the advancement of Art.

Brave men there were before Agamemnon's day; there were also brave men after him. So with Art. Genius has lived in days gone, it will live again, and indeed it is always with us. And when to-morrow perhaps a man of genius tries to struggle to the light, will the world detect the sparkle and remember its regret, that in similar cases in the past help had not been given? Will it take genius, while still alive, by the hand? or will it stupidly miss its chance once more, and wait a generation, till fashion has created recogni-

tion, and until a dead craftsman's work has at last attained commercial worth, based on its own excellence, or has become popular as a gambling counter? And a gambling counter it often is, for fewer works of Art are eagerly sought for by the collector on the ground of merit than are bought in semi-conscious hope or expectation that they may eventually prove a satisfactory speculation. And will the world never see that the masterpieces of the past, now possessing an enhanced value, due solely to their greater or less age, were once entitled to the description which blights the work of living men, "modern"?

To all this, any craftsman at any time will always make the same reply. It will always be the same, notwithstanding all that has been, and will be said. The Beautiful is a sealed book to most, and those who can read at all are too few and too weak to make their voices heard.

Their efforts are almost entirely ineffectual, and especially when confronted with the chatter of fashion or false sentimentality, and they resign themselves to the inevitable without vexation, and acquiesce in a condition of things which has existed so long that it apparently cannot be remedied.

Schopenhauer understood the position when he reminded us that the wise men of all times said the same, and the fools—that is, the immense majority of all times—have always done the same—that is to say, the opposite to what the wise have said. Consequently, to be vexed with human stupidity,[1] and to expect less perversity in the recognition, at the critical moment, of the Beautiful in Art, is, in itself, an extreme form of stupidity. The lesson that has to be accepted is, that it is hopeless to expect that real artistic merit will ever

[1] Did not Thomas à Kempis say: "Si non potes te talem facere qualem vis, quomodo poteris alium ad tuum habere beneplacitum?" (*De Imit. Christi.*)

receive, when it needs it, that to which it is entitled, and that genius, while assistance is of value, will be helped to reach the point which genius unassisted could not attain. Those who possess power to render that assistance have as a rule so little of the correct critical faculty that they are driven to make market price the basis of their taste and admiration. Wealthy patrons of Art continually prove themselves to be buyers of rarities more than lovers of Art. They do not so much seek to enjoy as they crave to possess. The higher the quotation the more eager is their desire to shower gold, for their vanity is flattered by an opportunity to show they can outdistance the purses of competitors. The existing and veritable work of a dead man does not increase, its price therefore rises with demand. The attention attracted by price to the work of the dead masters, fine though it may be, and that is not disputed, does harm to Art, and to living men, who may even in turn become

old masters ; for it indirectly pours contempt on living men, discourages their efforts, and stamps their genius as being incapable of producing work to reach that standard which is the measure of the Beautiful and the True.

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THE ETCHINGS OF PIRANESI

It is not intended to give a collation of the reprints issued in Paris, as they are unsatisfactory from a collector's point of view.

As far as possible the notes are arranged in the order of date of the publication of the earliest complete editions.

Except where otherwise stated the plates are engraved by G. B. Piranesi.

Antichità Romane de' Tempi della Repubblica e de' primi Imperatori, etc. (Archi Trionfali Antichi, Templi, etc.). Rome, 1748.

1 title, 1 dedication, 2 inscriptions, 11 plates, title to second part, and 14 plates. A title to the second part follows plate 15, and is not numbered. Five of these are drawn by Israel Silvestre.

A reprint of the plates in the above appeared under the following title :—

Alcune Vedute di Archi Trionfali ed altri

Monumenti inalzati da Romani parte de quali si veggono in Roma e parte per l'Italia. Rome, 1748.

This has two extra plates, one at the beginning and one at the end. The first is, presumably, by Francesco, and the last is signed by him. The border to the title is the same, but the borders to the dedication and two inscriptions in the "Antichità" have been omitted in the "Alcune Vedute."

Opere Varie di Architettura Prospettive Grotteschi Antichità sul gusto degli Antichi Romani. Rome, Bouchard, 1750. Engraved title and 27 plates.

The second plate forms another title, Prima Parte di Architettura e Prospettive.

This work sometimes has the portrait of Piranesi by E. Polanzani, "faciebat 1750."

As mentioned on p. 17, four of the plates of this work were published separately about 1741, and are the earliest published plates of Piranesi.

Le Carceri d'Invenzione. See p. 41 and p. 112.

"Invenzione Capric di Carceri all acqua forte datte in luce . . . Giovanni Bouchard . . ." 14 plates, including title-page. Rome, Bouchard. Between 1745 and 1750.

In the more generally known series of 16 plates the title runs: "Carceri d'Invenzione di G. Battista-Piranesi . . ." Bouchard's name does not appear. On an additional (second) plate are the words: "Presso l'autore a Strada Felice vicino alla Trinità de' Monti al prezzo di paoli venti."

16 plates, including title-page. Rome, 1750. The added plates are Nos. 2 and 5.

Piranesi's letterpress catalogue says, "planches faites, 1742." [See Bibliography, p. 202.]

Vedute di Roma. 2 vols.

Vol. I. Map, title, and 69 plates.

Vol. II. 68 plates, with allegorical plate usually inserted as title.

The Soane Museum copy has 2 interiors of St. Peter's engraved by Francesco which are not part of the "Vedute."

In 1751, 34 plates and the engraved "Vedute" title-page were published by Bouchard with the title "Le Magnificenze di Roma le più remarcabili." This contains the allegorical plate described above.

Piranesi's first engraved catalogue in the possession of the publisher, and reproduced

in this work (see Plate 3), gives an engraved list of 60 plates, with the names of 3 more in manuscript (presumably in Piranesi's own handwriting). It bears date May 1764.

Raccolta di Varie Vedute. Rome, Bouchard, 1751.

93 small views on 46 plates (one being on the letterpress title).

Only 47 of these views are by Piranesi.

A view of "La Real Villa del Ambrogiana," forming Plate 17 of "Vedute delle Ville e d'altri luoghi della Toscana," by Ginueppe Zocchi. Florence, 1757.

Trofei di Ottaviano Augusto con vari altri Ornamenti Antichi. Rome, Bouchard, 1753. Letterpress title with small engraving and 9 plates.

1758. Engraved title (including small engraving as above) and 15 plates.

In the second edition the new plates are numbered 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9.

Le Antichità Romane. 4 vols.

1756. 216 plates = vol. i. 43; ii. 63; iii. 54; iv. 56.

1786. 218 plates = vol. i. 44; ii. 63; iii. 54; iv. 57.

The 1786 edition is often quoted as

having 224 plates. This is due to the addition of the six "Monumenti degli Scipioni" in some copies.

The earlier copies of the four volumes issued in 1756 contained dedications to "Jacopo Caulfield Vicecomiti Charlemont." But for the reasons explained on p. 77 *et seq.* his name was suppressed. Thus copies containing the dedication to Lord Charlemont are rare.

The second edition, issued by Francesco in 1786 after his father's death, has dedications to Gustavus III. of Sweden.

The first edition contains the portrait of Piranesi by Polanzani, but in the second this is replaced by that by Guisseppe Cades, reproduced as a frontispiece to this volume.

Camere Sepolchrae degli Antichi Romani.

Engraved title and 13 plates.

This work was formed from a collection of plates out of the second and third volumes of the "Antichità Romane," the descriptions on some of the plates having been slightly altered.

Lettere di Giustificazione scritte a Milord Charlemont. 1757. 8 plates.

De Romanorum Magnificentia et Architec-

tura. (Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani.) Rome, 1760.

Latin title, Italian title, portrait of Clement XIII., plates i. to xxxviii. Four of these (namely, xvii., xviii., xix., and xxx.) being plates joined together, are counted as 4.

Four plates in Adam's *Works in Architecture.*

"Robt. Adam 1761. Eques J. B. Piranesi Sculpt. Romæ." "Published 1778." (Lord Derby's copy at Knowsley.)

Le Rovine del Castello dell'Acqua Giulia. Rome, 1761.

Engraved title and 19 plates.

It is often difficult to make the collations agree; in this case, for example, the copies at the British and Soane Museums have title and 19 plates, but the engraved catalogue of Piranesi's works issued by himself says 21 plates and the catalogue of his sons, dated 1792, says 20.

Antichità de Cora. Rome, 1762.

Engraved title, one plate unnumbered, and plates i. to x. (plate i. being two sheets joined together).

Campus Martius Antiquae Urbis. (Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma.) Rome, 1762.

Latin title, Italian title, and 48 plates. Of these plates Nos. ii. and xxxi. are formed

by 2 plates being pasted together, and plates v. to x., dedicated to Robert Adam, when joined together form one large plan of the Campus Martius.

Lapides Capitolini sive Fasti Consulares Triumphalesque Romanorum. Rome, 1762.

Engraved title, dedication to Clement XIII., and 3 plates.

A View of Part of the Intended Bridge at Blackfriars, London, in August 1764, by Robert Mylne, architect, engraved by G. B. Piranesi at Rome.

Antichità d'Albano e di Castel Gandolfo. Rome, 1764.

Engraved title, dedication to Clement XIII. and plates i. to xxvi.

Descrizione e disegno dell' Emissario del Lago Albano.

Engraved title and plates i. to ix. Plate iii. is two plates joined together.

Di Due Spelonche ornati dagli Antichi alla Riva del Lago Albano.

Letterpress title with small engraving, and plates i. to xii., plate viii. being two plates joined together.

Osservazioni di G. B. Piranesi sopra la Lettre de M. Mariette aux auteurs de la Gazette Littéraire de l'Europe. Rome, 1764.

Engraved title and plates i. to ix.

This is usually found bound at the end of "De Romanorum Magnificentia et Architectura."

Parere su l'Architettura. No plates.

This is often mentioned as being a separate work by Piranesi, but it is actually part of the above, the pages being numbered consecutively.

Della Introduzione e del progresso delle belle Arti in Europa ne' Tempi Antichi. Rome, 1765. 3 plates.

The note about the Parere again applies, the pages numbering on from those of the Parere.

An Allegorical Composition, engraved by Charpentier; this is the plate at the end of the French edition of Jacques Barozzio de Vignole, published in 1767. This rare volume containing plates of Decoration, is usually known as Blondel's Edition.

A View of St. Peter's, Rome, engraved by Charpentier; also to be found in this edition of Jacques Barozzio de Vignole, 1767.

Diverse Maniere d'Adornare i Cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi, desunte dell' Architettura Egizia e Etrusca, Greca, e Romana. Rome, 1769.

Frontispiece and 69 plates.

The text is in Italian, English and French.

Colonna di Trajano. Rome, 1776.

21 plates.

Colonna Antonina. Undated.

5 plates.

Colonna dell' Apoteosi di Antonino Pio. Undated. 5 plates.

Vasi Candelabri Cippi Sarcofagi Tripodi Lucerne ed ornamenti Antichi. Rome, 1778. 112 plates.

Différentes vues de quelques restes des trois Grandes Edifices de Pesto dans la Lucanie.

Engraved title and 20 plates. 3 of these plates are signed, "Francesco Piranesi"; the remaining 17 are signed, Cav. Piranesi.

Teatro di Ercolano. Rome, 1783.

Engraved title and 9 plates. (*Francesco Piranesi.*)

Monumenti degli Scipioni. Rome, 1785.

6 plates. (*Francesco Piranesi.*)

Raccolta de' Tempi Antichi. (Sciographia Quatuor Templorum Veterum.) Prima Parte che comprehende i tempi di Vesta-madre ossia della Terra della Sibilla, e dell'onore e delle Vertù. Rome, 1776.

Engraved title and 22 plates. (*Francesco Piranesi.*)

Seconda Parte de' Tempi Antichi che contiene il celebre Panteon. Rome, 1790.

Letterpress title with small engraving and 29 plates. (*Francesco Piranesi.*)

In many copies plates i., vii. to ix., and xxix. are wanting; this may be due to the fact that they were not issued in the earlier copies.

Statue Antiche.

41 plates. (*Francesco Piranesi.*)

Piranesi's letterpress catalogue (see Bibliography, p. 202) gives a list of 52 plates, but only 32 are marked with an asterisk as having then appeared. Probably therefore the 11 plates in addition to the 41 mentioned above were never published. The engraving of Angelini's statue of G. B. Piranesi is found in this work. (*Francesco Piranesi.*)

Varie tabulae celeberrimorum Pictorum. Raccolta di Alcuni Disegni del Barberi da Cento detto il Guercino incisi in rame e presentati al Sig. T. Jenkins dall' Architetto. G. B. Piranesi.

With 2 plates engraved by Francesco and dedicated to his father, "Apud Equitem Johannem Baptistem Piranesi."

Antiquités de la Grande Grèce aujourd'hui

Royaume de Naples . . . gravées. par F. Piranesi d'après les dessins du père, J. B. Piranesi. Paris, 1804–7.

105 plates. 3 vols.

In the letterpress catalogue issued in 1801 the following are quoted as being "Différentes vues dessinées par Després et gravées, par François Piranesi" :—

Illumination de la Croix de S. Pierre le jeudi et le vendredi saints, vue d'en haut.

Chapelle Pauline illuminée.

Château S. Ange au moment que l'on tire le feu d'artifice dit la Girandola vu d'en haut.

Grotte de Posilippe, vue d'en haut, d'un effet merveilleux.

Plan général de la Villa de Pompeia.

Temple d'Isis vu de face. 1788.

Entrée de la Porte de la Ville.

Tombeau de Mammia.

Cloître des Chartreux dans les Thermes de Dioclétien avec la vue au milieu du grouppe des quatre Ciprès au clair de lune, peint par François Sablet, et gravé par François. (Piranesi.)

Deux Bacchantes trouvées dans les ruines de la Ville de Pompeia. On les voit dans le Musée Royal à Portico.

Dimentions géométriques du plan et élévation

de l'émissaire du Lac Fucino, achevé par l'Empereur Claude. Dessiné par J. Baptiste et achevé par François. En 2 feuilles.
6 plates.

Plan de la Villa Adrienne, où l'on voit les ruines des Edifices que l'Empereur avait construits dans le style des bâtimens les plus remarquables de la Grèce et d'Egypte. En 6 feuilles.
3 plates.

Vue de la Grande Place de Padoue. En 3 feuilles.

Plan du Palais de Sans Souci.

Cinq différentes Bordures pour ornament des estampes.

Plan du Cirque de Caracalla. En 2 feuilles.

The following are included in the catalogue issued in 1792 as being in preparation ("qu'on grave actuellement"), but there is no evidence that they ever appeared :—

Statues des plus célébres Sculptures de nos jours.

Choix des Meilleures Bas-Reliefs, Antiques en planches.

Vues des Maisons de Campagne ou Villes de Rome, de Frascati, de Tivoli.

DRAWINGS BY PIRANESI

British Museum

52 DRAWINGS; but at least one of them is probably the work of Francesco Piranesi, and two others, although catalogued under the name of Piranesi, ought not, in the opinion of the Author, to be attributed to Piranesi, father or son (see page 129).

National Gallery of Scotland

4 drawings: Murray Collection, Laing bequest, etc.

A staircase, very fine indeed.

A study in the manner of the *Carceri* plates.

An architectural design.

The square in front of St. Peter's at Rome.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

A few unimportant drawings.

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM,
LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, LONDON.

The Pæstum drawings.

Two powerful studies, one of them in the manner of the *Carceri* plates.

[The student should make a close examination of the various collections of drawings to be found in this Museum, see pp. 126 to 136 of this volume.]

IN LORD ROSEBERY'S COLLECTION, AT DURDANS, EPSOM.

A small sketch of a scene at Spoleto; umber.

IN THE COLLECTION OF G. A. SIMONSON, LONDON.

A splendidly conceived imaginative composition of an Arched Entrance flanked with columns.

KUNSTHALLE, AT HAMBURG

16 drawings :—

1. Study of a Cornice Moulding ; sepia.
2. Study of Doorway ; sepia and red chalk.
3. Fractured Columns ; sepia.
4. Figure Study, for a Carnival Scene ; sepia.
5. Study of Arches ; sepia.
6. Roman Ruins; red chalk and sepia.
7. Interior of a Church ; red chalk and sepia.
8. Interior of a Palace ; sepia.
9. Castle Gate ; sepia.
10. Harbour Scene ; sepia.
11. Castle Gate, with Equestrian Statues; red chalk and sepia.
12. Study of an Arch, viewed from below ; sepia and red chalk.
13. Study of a Bridge ; sepia and red chalk.
14. View into an Arena.
15. Stone Vase on a Pedestal ; sepia.
16. Capitals of Columns ; sepia.

At the date of the publication of this book there is living at Florence Giorgio Piranesi, who described himself in a letter to the Author as "ultimo rappresentante del nome." He has written a number of pamphlets and publications, some of which deal with matters connected with the works of Dante.

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